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SIR ANDREW WYLIE,

OF THAT ILK.

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE,

OF THAT ILK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANNALS OF THE PARISH," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE.

CHAPTER I.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

Charles Pierston, who had for some time been settled in business by his uncle, on his own account, called one evening on our hero, and begged the loan of a thousand pounds. Wylie was not surprised at the application, for various circumstances had come to his knowledge, which gave him reason to suspect, that the prosperity of Charles was deeply affected by some of those political convulsions, which at that time deranged the commercial relations of the world.

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"Charles," said Andrew, "I dinna refuse your request, but it's proper and fit that ye should enable me to ascertain if the thousand pounds can be of any real service; therefore gang and bring me your books, and when I have ta'en a blink of their contents, I'll gie you an answer, and I sincerely wish it may be in the shape of a cheque for the sum you want."

Pierston was not altogether perfectly satisfied with this reply, but it was so reasonable that he could not object to the proposal, and accordingly went for his books.

During his absence Wylie sent for one of the ablest accountants, who, by the time Charles returned, he had in the house. He did not apprise his friend of this circumstance; on the contrary, the moment he appeared with the books, he took them from him, and said, "Ye maun leave them with me till the morn, when ye'll come, and I'll gie them back, I hope, wi' a favourable answer."

Charles felt something like mortification at this strict and austere mode of proceeding; for he calculated on the familiarity of ancient friendship, and he did not conceive his situation to be at all

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such as that the application for a temporary loan should be treated so particularly. However, he suppressed the slight feeling of resentment, which arose, as it were, in anticipation of a refusal, while he suffered the sensation of that chill and disagreeable experience of the true nature of the world, which is commonly the usual foretaste of misfortune.

When he returned in the morning, his old friend received him with more than usual cordiality, and kept him for some time in general conversation. Pierston had discernment enough to perceive that this was but the prelude to a negative; and after enduring the effort, that Andrew was evidently making to prepare him for the decision he had obviously come to, he said abruptly, "But have you examined my books?"

Our hero did not immediately reply, but looked for some time as if at a loss for an answer.

"I see how it is," resumed Pierston; "you do not think it prudent to grant me the loan?"

"I would give you the money," replied Andrew, "if it could be of any service; but your affairs are widely scattered, and although all is clear and

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satisfactory, I am sure that, in the present state of the world, you cannot get the better of your difficulties. Charlie, let me gie you a word of counsel,—strive no longer with your fortune.—In a word, end your business, and go into the Gazette as a bankrupt."

Charles became pale, his lips quivered, and a momentary flash of indignation gleamed from his eyes.

"Dinna mistake me, Charlie, I am speaking as a friend—Your character as a man of business is unblemished, and your integrity stands clear; but if ye struggle on, you will be reduced to expedients that will ruin both, and you must break at last, amidst a fearful outcry of deluded creditors."

Charles made no reply; taking up his books, he immediately retired, and Wylie made no attempt to appease the feelings with which he was evidently troubled. But as soon as Pierston had left the house, he went directly to the Marquis of Avonside. "My Lord," said he, "I'm come to ask a small favour of your Lordship—a friend of mine has five thousand pounds to lend at common interest, and I have been thinking, as your Lordship

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will in a manner be obligated to take on something against the expences of the ensuing general election, this is an opportunity to get the money at an easy rate, the which, in my opinion, your Lordship should not neglect."

The Marquis bestowed liberal commendations on the forethought of his agent, and readily agreed to take the money. Some light and humorous conversation then followed, and after a reasonable time, Andrew rose to go away. In moving, however, across the floor, he paused suddenly, and said, "My Lord Marquis, there's a sma' matter in which I would be greatly obliged to your Lordship.—Sometimes, among my friends, there are young lads to be provided for, and it would really be a thing of a convenience to me, if your Lordship could get a recommendation put down in the minister's books, for a post under the government at home or abroad, the same to stand at my disposal. I'm no particular as to what it may be—only I would like it was something good, and likely to be soon forthcoming."

The Marquis smiled, and cheerfully promised, saying, "I have sometimes thought, Wylie, that

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you have not turned the interest of your friends so well to account as you might do; and therefore, as this is the first favour you have ever requested of me, I must try to do the best I can, especially as you have asked for no particular appointment."

"That's very kind of your Lordship," replied Andrew; "and your liberal patronage shall not flow upon any unworthy object."

The same evening, our hero received a note from the Marquis, informing him that the minister, in the House of Lords, had promised him the nomination to a secretaryship in India, which was to be soon vacated. Charles Pierston was immediately sent for.

"Weel, Charlie," said Andrew, as he entered the room, "have you reflected on what I said to you in the morning?"

Charles replied that he had, and that he was extremely distressed and perplexed.

"I'm wae for that, man," said Andrew; "but better ken the warst at ance. Think weel on what I have counselled, for I can now say that an end to your perplexities, earned with a clear character, is the very best thing that can happen."

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But Charles was swayed by a thousand indefinable feelings, and vacillated between shame and resolution. Andrew, however, without giving him the slightest intimation of what had taken place between himself and the Marquis, had the satisfaction to see, before they parted for the night, that a tendency towards his opinion had begun to take place in the mind of Pierston. He, in consequence, refrained from urging him farther, leaving the bias to work out its own effect; and in the course of a few days after, he had the satisfaction to receive a note from Charles, informing him that, sensible it was in vain to struggle any longer, he submitted to what really appeared to be his inevitable fate.

The prudence of this step was soon recognized by the creditors of Pierston; and in the shortest possible course of law, as a testimony of their respect for his manliness and honesty, they granted him an unanimous discharge. Charles brought it to Andrew, in some hope that perhaps he would then be induced to lend him the sum he had formerly solicited, to assist him to begin the world anew; but after looking at the document carefully, he said

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only, "Charlie, I'm very well pleased to see this, but I have a particular occasion to gang out just now, and ye maun excuse my leaving you."

The heart of Charles swelled within his bosom, and he turned aside, unable to speak, while his friend hastily quitted the room. There was perhaps some degree of cruelty in this proceeding; for our hero having obtained the nomination to the Indian appointment, might have told him of that circumstance; but he recollected always the old proverb, that many things happen between the cup and the lip, and did not feel himself justified to encourage any hope which might be frustrated. He, however, on leaving the house, went to the Marquis, and did not quit his Lordship, until he had got the nomination and appointment of Charles confirmed. The urgency with which he had pursued this object struck his Lordship, and he rallied Wylie with all the wit of which he was master, on the supposed profit and advantage derived from the job.

"What your Lordship says is very true," replied Andrew. "I'll no deny that it has been a good wind-fall; but the public, or I'm mista'en,

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will hae no reason to complain; for Mr Pierston is a man both of parts and principles. Indeed, had I no been fully persuaded of this, it would ne'er have entered my head to solicit the powerful help of your Lordship's hand in his behalf."

We shall not attempt to describe what ensued, when Wylie informed his old companion of his appointment, as the sequel will shew the feelings with which Pierston ever afterwards cherished the remembrance of the obligation thus conferred.

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CHAPTER II.

PATRIOTISM.

The Marquis of Avonside, soon after he had procured the appointment for Pierston, received a confidential communication from one of his ministerial friends, relative to the dissolution of Parliament, by which his Lordship was induced to send immediately for our hero, as his solicitor, to consult him with respect to the management of the borough of Bidfort, in which his Lordship's influence was expected to be keenly contested. The noble Marquis was one of the most disterested supporters of his Majesty's servants, as long as they enjoyed the confidence of their royal master, and, perhaps, correctly speaking, he could not therefore be considered as a party man. His

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public conduct being regulated by what might be called the hereditary politics of his family, he had not found it profitable; indeed, to do him justice, he did not regard personal aggrandizement as at all a legitimate object even of his courtly patriotism. On the contrary, his estates were much encumbered by the consequences of his endeavours to preserve that political importance which his ancestors had always enjoyed in the state, and which was severely menaced by the rising influence of other more talented or wealthier families.

But not to meddle with such matters, which at present do not lie exactly in our way, our hero, on reaching the residence of the Marquis, found his Lordship alone; who, after a short preliminary conversation relative to the object in view, and the arrangements for a new mortgage, to enable him to carry on the election, said, "Now I think of it, Wylie; why don't you get into the House? I would as soon give my influence in Bidfort to you as to any man I know; not that I think you qualified to make any figure in debate, but there is a great deal of private and committee business, in

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which you are eminently fitted to take an able and an effectual part. I wish you would think of this; and if you are disposed to close with the offer, you shall have my interest for less than any other candidate."

The proposition did not meet an unprepared mind. From the time that our hero found he had risen to his natural level in society, the ambition to become a Member of Parliament had several times stirred in his fancy. He had actually formed the design of sounding his Lordship on the subject; nevertheless, his characteristic prudence did not allow him to give a frank answer.

"I'm sure," said he, "that I'm greatly obliged to you, my Lord; and what ye propose is a very friendly turn; but it's far from my hand to take a part in the great council o' the nation;—no that I think there are not bits o' jobbies about the House wherein a bodie like me might mess and mell as weel as anither. But, my Lord, ye know that your interest needs to be supported through thick and thin; and that I'm rather inclined to follow the politics o' my noble frien' the Earl, your

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son-in-law; who is, as your Lordship has long complained, a dure hand with the Whigs."

The Marquis was a little perplexed with this answer; it was not a negative, nor was it an assent; but implied something like an overture towards negociation. His Lordship, however, without committing himself, replied, "Of course, Mr Wylie, I should expect that in all public measures you would divide with my ministerial friends; but I should never think of tying you up on questions of speculative policy, except on Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation. These are fixed points, and against these, your vote, be whosoever minister, I would hold pledged."

"Anent them, my Lord, ye need be under no apprehension; for it's no to be expectit, as a thing in the course o' nature, that I would, in the first place, part wi' the stool that supported me; and, in the second, my conscience will never consent that I should be art or part to being in the whore of Babylon among us, riding on the beast with seven heads and ten horns. But what would your Lordship expect, if it was proposed to the

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House to clip the wings o' that fat goose the episcopalian establishment?"

"How!" cried his Lordship, in terror. "Touch the church, Mr Wylie!—Are you in earnest?—Why that would be to pull down the state."

"I didna say any thing about my touching the church. No, gude forgie me, I'm no for meddling wi' sae slippery blades as the clergy; I but put the thing by way o' a hypothesis; for in this age of innovation and change, it's no impossible that some o' the gabs o' the House will agitate the question; and what I would like to know is, whether, if the matter were to come to an issue, ye would expect me to vote for upholding the whole tot o' the establishment as it stands at present; or if it were proposed to reduce the tithes, and to give a portion of them to the state or to the landlord, which your Lordship would prefer?"

"Why," said the Marquis, "I'm not apprehensive that any such question will come on. In the course of the present reign, it would be hopeless; but, undoubtedly, were the attempt to be made, the landlord has the best right to the tithes."

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"I had a notion that would be your Lordship's opinion," replied Andrew. "But, my Lord, as the tithes are the property o' the church, would it no be more natural for the Members o' Parliament, who, like me, have no land, to take a portion of the tithes to themselves, than to give them to the landlords?"

The Marquis was puzzled, and could not see the drift of our hero's observations.

"Howsever," continued Andrew, "I think wi' your Lordship, that it's no a question very probable to be debated for some time yet; only it was necessary that I should ascertain what was the bearing o' your Lordship's mind on such concerns. And noo that I clearly understand your Lordship's representatives are no to vote for Reformations, nor for Catholic Emancipation; and that if the question of Church Spoliation comes on, they are to vote for the behoof of the landlords, we may come to the point about the borough. What's the price your Lordship would expect, if I agree to come in for your Lordship, tied neck and heel to your Lordship's ministerial friends?"

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The Marquis winced a little at the plainness of this language, but he could not refrain from smiling. "Why," said he, "if you come in for one of my close boroughs, you shall have it for three thousand five hundred; I will give it to no one else for less than four thousand; and there is a recent Indian importation that will give me even more, but he is a talking fellow, and I like all my friends to work well and say nothing."

"Really that's a great temptation, my Lord; and I think we might come to a conclusion, if your Lordship would just gang a wee thought ajee, to let my conscience hae room to slip cannily out and in when it's a straight case."

"Upon that head," replied the Marquis, "we shall not differ, I dare say;—you are a sensible man, and I would trust as much to your discretion in politics, as to any gentleman's that I happen to know. But the government must be supported."

"My Lord Avonside," said our hero, with great seriousness of manner, "my Lord Avonside, I trust and hope that no man can presume to

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suspect that I would not support the government?"

"I beg your pardon, Mr Wylie," replied his Lordship; "I never called in question the soundness of your principles; and I think the proposition which I have made to bring you into Parliament, is a proof of the respect in which I hold them."

"I'm sure your Lordship has no reason to think otherwise of my politics, than as those of a man endeavouring throughout life to act an honest part; and, therefore, I'm only grieved, wishing, as I do, to avail mysel o' your Lordship's kind offer, that you should think of requiring from me any pledge or promise as to the way I shall vote; for that's a vera great impediment to my accepting the favour your Lordship wishes to do me."

"To be plain with you, Wylie, I do not require any thing more from you than from those other gentlemen whom I send into Parliament. It is a necessary preliminary that the understanding on which I lend them my interest, should be clear and explicit."

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"Nae doubt of that; the money should be regularly paid, and the nature o' the bargain perfectly understood. But that your Lordship may not hae cause to be chided about any change in your system," replied Andrew, dryly, "I'll tell you what I'll do. Ye know what my principles are, my Lord; and out of a friendship which I canna express my pride o', ye would send me into Parliament for five hundred pounds less than ony ither body—fast bound to your Lordship's ministerial friends in a' debates. Noo, my Lord, if ye'll consent to let me gang in free, I'll stand the contest in Bidfort at my own expence, whate'er the cost may be, the which will be both honourable to your Lordship and me."

"You are a strange mortal," said his Lordship, laughing; "and I cannot but agree to your proposal. I hope, nevertheless, you will not disappoint my confidence in your ministerial principles."

"I trust your Lordship's ministerial friends will no gie me ony cause to mak your Lordship rue the bargain."

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Such were the preliminaries that led to our hero's return to Parliament. But there were certain circumstances connected with his election too important to be omitted; especially as Minerva, in the shape of the old gipsy woman, facilitated his return, perhaps, with more effect than some of the more consequential and ostensible agents.

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CHAPTER III.

AN ELECTION.

Soon after Andrew had publicly announced his intention to stand for Bidfort, the grateful gipsies made their appearance before his house, and the old woman claimed admission.

"Weel, lucky," said our hero, as the footman shewed her in, "whar are ye come from, and what's your will wi' me noo?"

"I have come to thank you again, and to serve you, for the kindness you have done to me and mine," replied the gipsy respectfully.

"Na, na, honest woman, ye canna bide here. I hae nae need of your servitude—I hae o'er mony in the house already," was the answer.

At which the old woman smiled, and said, "I come not, sir, to ask to share your fee or your

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fire; but to offer what skill I have to help your fortunes." And she looked at him some time, with a queer and sly expression of curiosity; and then seating herself unbidden in a chair, opposite to where he was sitting, said, "You have hests in hand that I may further. Try my art. Seek you to stand in presence of the King? Would you thrive in some fair lady's love? There are paths through the thicket that the gipsies know—trust my guidance."

When the old woman had made this tender of her services, she sat for some time silent; and Wylie, meditating for two or three minutes on what she had said, then addressed her to the following effect:—"I'll tell you what, gudewife, ye mauna try to cast your glammer o'er me. Ye have heard that I'm a candidate for Bidfort, so none o' your slights to beguile me with false hopes."

The old woman made no reply for some time to this; but sat in evident cogitation, and once or twice lifted the forefinger of her left hand suddenly to her lips, as if actuated by some quick internal impulse. She then raised herself erectly,

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as if fully prepared for the disclosure of some important result of her meditations.

"We know," said she, "how to bend the mind to love, and to unroot the weed of hate, and plant the rose of kindness in its stead. By the same art we'll work for you; and tide whatever may betide, you'll find in the end that we can do you service. What's your electioneering colour to be?"

"Orange and true blue, to be sure; the Protestant ascendency, and the Hanoverian succession."

The old woman immediately rose, and, without saying a word, left the room. Before our hero could recover his surprise, she was out at the street-door. The servants, who observed her hurry away, ran up to see that she had stolen nothing; and were some time in answering their master's bell, who rung to order her some refreshment.

The rest of the gipsies who were lingering for their ancestress in the neighbouring streets, as soon as she made her appearance, rallied around her; and soon after they at once set off for Bidfort.

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At the entrance of the town, in a lone country lane leading to the common, they pitched their camp under a hedge; and while the men travelled the borough, the grandfather with his wheel to sharpen knives and razors, and his son with audible proposals to make horn-spoons, the old woman went from house to house, to see if the inmates had any old china to clasp, or rush-bottomed chairs to mend. The young woman begged with her infant; and the boy and urchin, with a basket filled with pedlar trumpery, plied about the market-place. This basket they had purchased on their way from London; and the principal articles which it contained consisted of small knots of orange and blue ribbon, and stay-laces made of twisted tapes of the same colours. Upon this device the grateful gipsies had expended a considerable part of the money which had been given them on the day of trial, and which they had till this time carefully preserved.

The gipsy boys, with great archness and merry roguery, so recommended their orange and true-blue love-knots and trinkets to the females and children, and sold them so temptingly cheap, that

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they were soon disposed of. Whenever his grandmother saw any of them in a house, she assumed her mystical looks, and said, "Orange betokens gold, and blue a true heart; the blessing of both be upon you."

For two or three days, in this manner, they seemed to be plying their wonted vocations; and when an opportunity presented itself, each of the party recommended the other as a skilful fortune-teller; the preference, however, was always given to the age and experience of the ancestress, who, to all her customers, predicted great riches, and honour, and happy days, from a "little man from out the north, with smooth round cheeks, and small eyes, clothed in orange and blue." The consequence of which was, that every maiden looked northward in her dreams for a lover of this description; and the imagination of every one in the town was unconsciously tinctured with an affection for ideas of orange and blue.

At last, the predetermined dissolution of Parliament, after all the friends of the ministers had got the start of their adversaries, was disclosed to the public. The highways resounded with cha-

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riots and horsemen; and the public-houses in every borough became the humming hives of patriotism, to the immediate benefit of the excise, which is perhaps the only part of the state that derives any immediate advantage from a general election.

Our hero and his friends having the ministerial advantage of starting before the patriotic nabob who opposed him, entered the borough in a barouche and four, all superbly decorated with large knots of orange and blue, and he required no herald to proclaim him. The gipsy's prediction had already disclosed him in vision; every eye at once recognized him, and he was received with universal acclamations, in which something even like a sentiment of superstitious reverence was mingled; insomuch, that when the nabob arrived, the whole town was like a bed of summer flowers, all orange and blue; and "the little man from out the north" was, although on the ministerial interest, so decidedly the popular favourite, that his rival at once gave up the contest, and retired from the field.

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The gipsies, immediately after the new member had been chaired, presented themselves at his inn; and the old woman, with triumph and exultation, explained to him, in her wild way, the metaphysical aid which she had given to him in the election.

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CHAPTER IV.

A ROYAL RESIDENCE.

Our hero was perfectly aware, that by his political connexion with the Marquis of Avonside, it would be necessary for him to appear early at Court; indeed, the Marquis, immediately on his return to Parliament, intimated as much, and that he would himself introduce him to the King.

Curiosity held a very subordinate station in the mind of Wylie; and it so happened, that it had never prompted him to seek a sight of majesty. Though moving in the higher circles of fashionable life, it could not be said that he had even acquired any knowledge of the private and personal character of George the Third. The retirement of the Royal Family to Windsor, had, indeed, rendered the King, in some degree, a stranger

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to his people; and, except on public occasions, levees, and drawing-rooms, his Majesty was rarely seen by them, but on the Sunday evenings on the terrace of the Castle.

Experience had taught Wylie, that some previous acquaintance with the peculiarities and characteristics of persons whom he had occasion to know, was of great consequence to a successful issue of whatever he might have to do with them, and an introduction at Court, so generally considered merely as a ceremonial, was to him an event to which he rightly attached much importance. He had been raised to that rank in life which made it, in some degree, indispensable; and it was not now beyond the range of ordinary probabilities, that he might one day be brought into actual intercourse with his sovereign. It was, therefore, in his opinion, requisite that he should be able so to conduct himself at the first interview, as not to leave any awkward or unfavourable impression. But to accomplish this required equal address and prudence, and it was a matter too delicate, even for the counsel of friendship, for its object and purpose could not be disclosed

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without divulging some of these nebulous and anticipating guesses, with respect to the chances of the future—those reveries of ambition which are seldom of a form so definite as to bear discussion. The Earl of Sandyford was the only one of his friends on whose judgment, in a matter of this sort, he would have placed any reliance; but although he justly admired his Lordship's acute perception, and delicacy of tact, he yet so dreaded his raillery, that he was deterred from consulting him; and therefore, after weighing the subject well in his own mind, he resolved to go secretly to Windsor, and gather on the spot as much information as possible, about the habits, the manners, and the character of the King.

Accordingly, at the hour when the Windsor afternoon coach usually leaves the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly, he was there, and took his place in a corner, shrinking from observation, lest any friend should accidentally pass, and question him respecting his excursion,—a thing, by the way, that has happily rather gone out of fashion. Only country friends or Edinburgh ad-

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vocates in town on appeal cases, ever think of either asking or wondering what their acquaintance can be doing in stage-coaches.

In this journey our senator met with no adventure, although three Eton boys, that were already playing at swells on the outside, once or twice attempted to quiz him. He was, however, their match, and by the end of the journey they were become jocose and familiar acquaintance. He learnt from them that the Castle Tavern was one of the best inns in Windsor; and one of the boys said, "that if he had no particular objection, they would call on him next day, and help him to ascertain what sort of wine was in the cellar."

"I can hae no objection," replied he, slyly, "to receive any civility at your hands; and if ye're disposed to treat me to a bottle o' the best o't, I'll e'en make an endeavour to do justice to your kindness."

And with this they parted. The cubs were left at their dame's door, where their fags were in obsequious attendance to receive their great coats, and to do their hests with an obedience as impli-

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cit as that with which Ariel served Prospero, while our hero, driven over the bridge, and up the hill, was set down at the Castle Tavern.

After taking tea in the coffee-room, which he did expressly for the purpose of asking questions at the waiter relative to the localities, he went to inspect the environs of the royal residence, and to see with what sort of external parade the actual abode of royalty was invested. His ideas on this subject were either not very clear, or very erroneous; for he was chilled, we might almost say awed, by the monastic silence which lingered in the wards and courts, except where the footfalls of the sentinels were heard, as the soldiers themselves, sympathising with the presiding genius of the place, performed their brief and narrow circuits before the different entrances, without exchanging a sentence; or where two or three of the small band of stone-cutters, employed in repairing the dilapidations of the towers and cornices, were heard chipping at their tasks in equal solemnity. He had expected to see steeds prancing and colours flying, and to hear drums beating and trumpets sounding, amidst the flourish, bustle, and

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pageantry, which he had supposed essential to the palace and court of an old and mighty monarchy. But an extreme simplicity, dignified only by the circumstances of antiquity with which it was associated, every where prevailed. The broad and gorgeous folds of the royal standard on the round tower, as it pompously and slowly floated on the summer breeze to the setting sun, was the only suitable ensign of present sovereignty that met his view.

It was too late in the evening then to see the apartments, but he resolved to do so early in the morning, not, however, with the slightest intention of looking either at the works of art, with which they are adorned, or to listen to the traditionary stories of the servants appointed to shew them. His object was to address himself to some one of the domestics, in the course of passing through the different halls and chambers, and so to lead into a conversation that might enable him to extract some authentic information respecting the real object of his visit. His inquiries that night were, therefore, chiefly regarding the times and modes of obtaining admission into the apart-

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ments, and when, where, and how, he could see the royal family to most advantage.

His walk round the Castle, and his inquiries of the persons he incidentally met with, filled up his time till it was dark, and he had no Shakesperian recollections to allure him into the Park when the moon rose. On the contrary, a most prosaic belief, that if he continued lingering there much beyond candle-lighting time, he might meet with nocturnal questioners more substantial than fairies, and quite as mischievous as those who played such pranks on Sir John Falstaff, induced him to retire early to the Inn, by which he lost the beautiful and romantic effect of the view of the Castle by moonlight,—a view which every one who has the slightest taste for the picturesque, ought neither to go abroad nor to die without seeing.

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CHAPTER V.

WINDSOR PARK.

By sunrise on the Sunday morning Wylie was brushing the early dew in the little Park, to taste the freshness of the morning gale, or as he himself better expressed it, to take a snuff of caller air on the brow of the hill. But healthful exercise was not his only reason for being so soon abroad; it occurred to him in the watches of the night, that as his Majesty was an early riser, the household too would of course be stirring with the cock; and that some of them might be more readily met with at that time than later in the morning. Accordingly, he kept a sharp look out on all sides as he strolled through the Park, but he saw only a solitary laundress, with a basket of linen on her head, going to the town, and three or four lumpish country boys that came whistling along the footpath

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from Datchet, in their clod shoes, with white cotton stockings, and the knees of their new velveteen breeches shewn in front beneath clean smock-frocks; the tails of which, behind, were tucked up to shew their Sunday coats.

Somewhat disappointed, but thinking he was still too early for the inmates of a palace, he prolonged his walk towards the meadows; and in stepping over a style, he saw, close before him, a stout and tall elderly man, in a plain blue coat, with scarlet cuffs and collar, which at first he took for a livery. There was something, however, in the air of the wearer, which convinced him that he could not be a servant; and an ivory-headed cane, virled with gold, which he carried in a sort of negligent poking manner, led him to conclude that he was either an old officer, or one of the Poor Knights of Windsor; for he had added to his learning, in the course of the preceding evening, a knowledge of the existence of this appendage to the noble Order of the Garter. "This," said the embryo courtier to himself, "is just the vera thing that I has been seeking. I'll mak up to this de-

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cent earl; for no doubt he's well acquaint with a' about the King," and he stepped alertly forward. But before he had advanced many paces, the old gentleman turned round, and seeing a stranger, stopped; and looking at him for two or three seconds, said to himself, loud enough, however, to be heard, "Strange man—don't know him—don't know him;" and then he paused till our hero had come up.

"Gude day, sir," said Wylie as he approached; "ye're early a-fit on the Sabbath morning; but I'm thinking his Majesty, honest man, sets you a' here an example of sobriety and early rising."

"Scotchman, eh!" said the old gentleman; "fine morning, fine morning, sir—weather warmer here than with you? What part of Scotland do you come from? How do you like Windsor? Come to see the King, eh?" and loudly he made the echoes ring with his laughter.

The senator was a little at a loss which question to answer first; but delighted with the hearty freedom of the salutation, jocularly said, "It's no

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easy to answer so many questions all at once; but if yeill no object to the method, I would say that ye guess right, sir, and that I come from the shire of Ayr."

"Ah, shire of Ayr!—a fine county that—good farming there—no smuggling now among you, eh?—No excisemen shooting Lords now?—Bad game, bad game. Poor Lord Eglinton had a true taste for agriculture; the county, I have heard, owes him much.—Still improving?—Nothing like it.—The war needs men—Corn is our dragon's teeth—Potatoes do as well in Ireland, eh?"

The humour of this sally tickled our hero as much as the author of it, and they both laughed themselves into greater intimacy.

"Well, but, sir," said Andrew, "as I'm only a stranger here, I would like to ask you a question or two about the King, just as to what sort of a man he really is; for we can place no sort of dependence on newspapers or history books, in matters concerning rulers and men of government."

"What! like Sir Robert Walpole—not believe

history?—Scotchmen very cautious." But the old gentleman added, in a graver accent, "The King is not so good as some say to him he is; nor is he so bad as others say of him. But I know that he has conscientiously endeavoured to do his duty, and the best men can do no more, be their trusts high or low."

"That, I believe, we a' in general think; even the blacknebs never dispute his honesty, though they undervalue his talents. But what I wish to know and understand, is no wi' regard to his kingly faculties, but as to his familiar ways and behaviour—the things in which he is like the generality of the world."

"Ha!" said the stranger, briskly, relapsing into his wonted freedom, "very particular, very particular, indeed. What reason, friend, have you to be so particular?—Must have some?—People never so without reason."

"Surely, sir, it's a very natural curiosity for a subject to inquire what sort of a man the Sovereign is, whom he has sworn to honour and obey, and to bear true allegiance with hand and heart."

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"True, true, true," exclaimed the old gentleman—"Just remark—Come on business to England?—What business?"

"My chief business, in truth, sir, at present here, is to see and learn something about the King. I have no other turn in hand at this time."

"Turn, turn," cried the stranger, perplexed—"What turn?—Would place the King on your lathe, eh?"

Our hero did not well know what to make of his quick and versatile companion; and while the old gentleman was laughing at the jocular turn which he had himself given to the Scottieism, he said, "I'm thinking, friend, ye're commanded no to speak with strangers anent his Majesty's conduct, for ye blink the question, as they say in Parliament."

"Parliament!—Been there?—How do you like it?—Much cry, and little wool among them, eh?"

"Ye say Gude's truth, sir; and I wish they would make their speeches as short and pithy as the King's. I'm told his Majesty has a very gra-

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cious and pleasant delivery," replied our hero, pawkily; and the stranger not heeding his drift, said, with simplicity,—

"It was so thought when he was young; but he is now an old man, and not what I have known him."

"I suppose," replied our hero, "that you have been long in his service?"

"Yes, I am one of his oldest servants.—Ever since I could help myself," was the answer, with a sly smile, "I may say I have been his servant."

"And I dinna doubt," replied the senator, "that you have had an easy post."

"I have certainly obeyed his will," cried the stranger, in a lively laughing tone; but changing into a graver, he added, "But what may be my reward, at least in this world, it is for you and others to judge."

"I'm mista'en, then, if it shouldna be liberal," replied Andrew; "for ye seem a man of discretion; and, doubtless, merit the post ye have so long possessed. Maybe some day in Parliament

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I may call this conversation to mind, for your behoof. The King canna gang far wrong ane long as he keeps counsel with such douce and prudent like men, even though ye have a bit flight of the fancy. What's your name?"

The old gentleman looked sharply; but in a moment his countenance resumed its wonted open cheerfulness, and he said, "So you are in Parliament, eh?—I have a seat there too—Don't often go, however—Perhaps may see you there—Good bye, good bye."

"Ye'll excuse my freedom, sir," said Andrew, somewhat rebuked by the air and manner in which his new acquaintance separated from him; "but if you are not better engaged, I would be glad if we could breakfast together."

"Can't, can't," cried the old gentleman, shortly, as he walked away; but turning half round after he had walked two or three paces, he added, "Obliged to breakfast with the King—he wont without me;" and a loud and mirthful laugh gave notice to all the surrounding echoes that a light and pleased spirit claimed their blithest responses.

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There was not much in this conversation that satisfied our hero; who perceived that it was no easy matter to gain the sort of knowledge which he had come on purpose to procure; and in the irksome humour which this reflection produced, he consumed the morning, loitering in the Park and about the Castle, till his usual breakfast hour, when he returned to the inn.

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CHAPTER VI.

A LEVEE.

During breakfast in the coffee-room, Andrew learned from some of the other strangers, who were similarly employed, that the best opportunity of seeing the Royal Family was when they went and came from church; for it was not always certain that they would walk on the Terrace in the evening.

"But," said he, "how am I to know the King? for I dinna suppose that his arms are like twa wild beasts, the lion and the unicorn. However, I'll avail mysel of your counselling, and tak my stance as ye advise, at the Royal entrance to St George's Chapel."

Accordingly, at the proper time he was at the place; but the moment that the carriage with

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their Majesties drew up, he saw the old gentleman whom he had met in the Park alone with the Queen. His heart sank within him at the sight, and he fled abashed and confounded; for he discovered that it was the King himself, and he shrunk with alarm at the liberties he had taken.

The terrors of this idea, however, abated as he returned to London; and when he recalled to recollection all that had passed, he was satisfied his Majesty was not likely to be displeased with him. By the time he reached home, he could, indeed, scarcely refrain from smiling at the adventure, when he thought how completely he had succeeded in the object of his excursion, at the very time when he was despairing of any success.

As the levee was to be held at St James's in the course of the week, on the following morning the Marquis called to remind him that he was to be presented.

Andrew made something like an attempt to decline this honour, in the hope that, by postponing it to a distant day, his Majesty might in the interim forget him; saying, "I doubt, my Lord

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Marquis, it winna be in my power to go to Court that day. I have a great fike o' matters in hand, concerning causes that are to be tried at the next term, and really I would fain postpone it for a season."

"That cannot be," replied his Lordship seriously. "It is not only expected that all my Parliamentary friends should shew themselves at Court, but be regular in their attendance."

"I hope, my Lord, that your Lordship doesna consider this indispensable; for ye know a professional man cannot command his time, if he would serve his clients with that fidelity, which, I hope, your Lordship and all mine have ever found, I have tried to the best of my ability to do."

"But the public must also be served, and those in public situations must consider that. I therefore expect you will be ready to go with me to St James's," replied the Marquis.

"If your Lordship makes a point o't, of consequence I maun yield. But really I did not think that there was any great serving o' the public by melting in a crowd at the levee."

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"Mr Wylie," said the Marquis gravely, "I thought you had a more correct notion of these sort of things. In what way can the public interests be more effectually promoted, than by a regular and dutiful attendance on the monarch? Does it not inspire the people with that awe and veneration, which is due from them to the first person in the state? In these times, when the jacobin principles of anarchy are so widely disseminated, it requires the most strenuous efforts, on the part of all men who have a stake in the country, to uphold the constitution in its original purity, of King, Lords, and Commons. For my part, were it not from a most devout persuasion of the utility of carrying my homage to the foot of the throne, I would never breathe the air of the Court, for I have no natural taste for it. But, Mr Wylie, when I reflect on the distinguished part that my family have always taken in public affairs, —in no instance, from the earliest periods, have any of the Spangles been found deficient in their attachment to the monarchy; having uniformly for ages, through many changes, revolutions, and

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transfers of the dynasty, been always found by the side of their Sovereign—a systematic line of policy which has secured them at all times, even in the rudest and most turbulent, from the vicissitudes that have attended the more versatile members of the Baronage."

"I am very sensible of the eminent part that your Lordship, like your forefathers of great renown, has played in politics; and no one can be more impressed than me with the honour of being taken by the hand, and led into the Presence, by a nobleman of your Lordship's courtesy," replied Andrew; "but my objection was not to the action, but only to the time—having, as I said, a power of important causes in hand, coming on at the approaching term."

"The introduction will not occupy more than two or three hours," replied the Marquis; "and when you have been presented, you may go as often after as you please; for his Majesty possesses the extraordinary faculty of retaining the most perfect recollection of every body that he has once seen."

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"Ah!" exclaimed our hero.

"My dear friend," said the Marquis, soothingly, "I hope it is not a twinge of the gout?" and his Lordship immediately mentioned a medicine, which he had often himself taken with the most beneficial effects.

To this kindly sympathy, leaving, however, his Lordship to imagine that the pang, which occasioned the interjection of anguish, might have sprung from the gout, Andrew made the best answer he could; and the Marquis went away with an understanding that the new member was to accompany him to the next levee.

When the day arrived, our hero, for the first time in his life, was irritable and fretful. His new court suit of dark-brown, in his opinion, neither fitted, nor was it of a proper sobriety of appearance. "The spurtle," as he peevishly called the sword, he thought would have hung more commodiously at the right than the left side. Every thing, in a word, teazed him, and he blamed the Marquis for his precipitation more than fifty times before he was equipped.

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He delayed going to his Lordship as long as possible, in order to allow the crowd time to fill the rooms before they could reach the palace; his intention being to hasten past the King in the throng, and so to avoid any particular observation. The Marquis, when he arrived, was almost as much out of humour as himself, declaring that he had never been so late of going to the levee before.

On reaching the palace, Andrew kept in the wake of his Lordship, from the moment that they ascended the great stair-case. To his short figure he trusted much; also something to his nimbleness, when he should approach the King; and indeed he so managed, that, by lowly crooking his knee at the presentation, and cowering down his head, averting his face at the same time, he had almost escaped the quick eye of royalty; but in the very moment when he was endeavouring to slink in behind the puckered form of a corpulent church-dignitary, he was caught in the fact, and instantly recognised by the King.

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"Ha! ha!" cried his Majesty; "fine morning, Shire of Ayr!—Come to see the King, eh? Come to see the King?"

Our hero, seeing there was no retreating, instantly mustered courage; and calculating on his knowledge of the King's familiar humour, said, "Ah! 'twas a soople trick o' your Majesty to delve a' out of me, and never to give me an inkling of who I was speaking to."

The Marquis of Avonside was petrified, and stood aghast; while the King, laughing heartily, amused by the recollection of his own address, and pleased with the compliment which Andrew had so dextrously applied, continued speaking,—

"Could not breakfast with you that morning, eh! But one good turn deserves another. What turn in hand now?" and in saying these words, his Majesty briskly addressed himself to a northern nobleman, then high in his confidence and favour, and said, "Your countryman, my Lord,—'deevilish cunning,' as Sir Archy says; but an honest man—honest man—noblest work of God!"

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Andrew availed himself of this ellipsis in his Majesty's discourse to hasten on, while some other person, to whom the King had also something jocular to say, appeared in sight, and drew off the royal attention from the new courtier.

The Marquis was most seriously indignant when he afterwards rejoined our hero, in their way to his Lordship's carriage; assuring him that he had run the greatest possible risk of meeting a most ungracious reception. But Lord Sandyford, when informed of the adventure, declared that he should not be surprised if our hero were to rival his famous countryman in the royal favour. Nor was this opinion improbable; for immediately after the next drawing-room, where he was again most cordially recognized by the King, he received an invitation to one of the Queen's parties at Buckingham-house, at which his Majesty requested him to come down to Windsor.

But history, when she records the cause which prevented our hero from being able to avail himself of the royal condescension, will change her smiles at the innocent foibles and artless jocularity

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of George the Third; and with a generous eloquence, rising into all her dignity, will describe the constancy of his virtues, the true English simplicity of his character, the fortitude of his public principles, and the purity of his private worth.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE SPIRIT OF IMPROVEMENT.

NEITHER the east nor the west of Scotland affords the best market for the disposal of beautiful young ladies with large fortunes. We have even some doubts whether those of the south or the north be any better. Certain it is, that although Mary Cunningham was, in all human probability, one of the finest and fairest of the "Ayrshire lasses," and surpassed by few in the prospects of fortune, she continued, during the regular advancement of our hero, still to bloom unplucked upon the parent spray. She had, doubtless, a due portion of the homage of tender glances, and of sordid proposals; but in the sequestered bower to which she was confined by the mingled spell of her father's indolence and her aunt's pride and

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prudence, no acceptable youth had obtained a proper clue to conduct him to her presence or affections. For, saving at the annual papingo ball at Kilwinning, she was rarely seen beyond the boundaries of the Craiglands. One season, indeed, after her return from Edinburgh, and when the renewal of a lease of one of the farms had brought a considerable augmentation to her father's income, her aunt had influence enough to induce the Laird to treat them with the pleasures of the Ayr Races, where Mary was universally admired, especially by the dashing officers of Lord Darlington's cavalry, at that time encamped in the neighbourhood, and who, like military men in general, thought as much of a rich heiress as a great beauty. But the circumspect Miss Misy had a well-founded apprehension of the occasional demonstrations of the military, and always drew her niece as far as possible from the scene of danger. In truth, Mary herself did not seem to be particularly interested by the accomplishments or understanding of any of those Yorkshire heroes of the unblemished sabre. But this was not to be wondered at, when we consider that those characters

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istics of intellectual superiority which have enabled the possessors to perform such miracles both abroad and at home, we mean mustaches, had not then been revived in the British Army.

The jaunt to Ayr was in consequence productive of no event; and Mary, after enjoying the social sunshine and gaieties of the race week, was conducted back to the dull monotony of that monastic seclusion which she was fated to lead at the Craiglands.

A few of the county bachelors now and then called, and sometimes looked as if they could woo; but they were all either too well stricken in years, or cast in too clumsy a mould, without any redeeming grace of mind, to gain on the affections of a spirited and elegant girl, who was not entirely unconscious of her charms.

We have been thus particular in describing the situation of Miss Cunningham, because we have some reason to suspect that her case is not a solitary one; and also, because it was necessary to explain how Fate worked, in the meantime, to keep the possessor of so much beauty, and with such affluence in reversion, almost neglected and un-

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known, while she was performing such prodigies to increase the fortune and augment the personal consideration of her lover.

But although Mary was thus destined to bloom like a rose in a conservatory, her days neither passed in indolence nor without enjoyment. Her education at Edinburgh had been skilfully conducted; and during her short visit to London, she had obtained a view of the world, from which her imagination easily enabled her to form a distinct and clear conception of its general outlines and bearings. Her taste, in consequence, found employment in superintending the restoration of the pleasure-grounds of the Craiglands; and her address an object in obtaining from the narrow ideas of her father, with respect to the importance of such things, the requisite funds to defray the expence. In this business she became insensibly and unconsciously a blessing to the village of Stoneyholm; for the old men found easier occupation in trimming the walks and lawns, than in hedging, and ditching, and the statute labour of the highways. She lightened their tasks; and it is only by so doing that the rich can wisely assist the poor; for toil is their in-

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heritance, and all that the well regulated spirits among them ever covet, is employment suitable to their strength.

It was thus, under the auspices of Miss Cunningham, that the genial influence of that improving genius, with which the whole kingdom was at the time animated, took effect in the native village of our hero—and he was not long uninformed of the change; for the master, regularly at the bottom of the letters which he wrote to him for his grandmother, mentioned from himself whatever occurred at Stoneyholm; and the taste and benevolence of Mary were the subjects which, unaware of their interest, he seemed most to delight in celebrating. "It is," said the amiable Tannyhill in one of those double epistles, "a wonder and pleasure to behold the beautifulness that's kithing around the Place,—which Miss Mary, after a great work, has got the Laird not only to white-wash the walls of the house, but to do a reparation to the dykes, that has made it no longer like the sluggard's garden which it was wont to be. She has even persuaded him to get two lead rones, with fine gilded whirligig tops to them, such as no man in this

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country side remembers to have seen, for they come all the way out of Glasgow; and I was obligated to give the school the play, when the plumbers came to set them up. Over and above all the good that she has done in this way, making the walks paths of pleasantness indeed, the redding up of the Craiglands has had a manifest effect in the way of example among ourselves, and we have several new houses bigging;—among others, there is some talk of taking down your grannie's, which she's a thought fashed at, having been so long her home, and would rather bide in it as it is, than flit to a better, which she is well enabled to do, out of your dutiful kindness."

Whatever satisfaction our hero derived from these epistles, this one was not entirely without alloy. He remembered with delight the innocent hours that he had spent in the old cottage; and regretted so much that it was likely to be removed before his return, that by the next post he wrote to Mr Tannyhill to offer any price for it and the garden, rather than it should be changed or destroyed. The master was delighted with this agency, and lost no time in effecting the purchase;

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but he was so eager that he gave no less than five-and-twenty pounds; being, in the opinion of every other inhabitant of the village, full five pounds more than the whole property was worth.

Our hero having thus become landlord of the cottage, then instructed his exulting agent to see that it was put into the most perfect state of repair, without altering, in any degree, its appearance; and likewise to add at the back a small room, "which must," as Andrew said in his letter, "be in a better fashion, with a deal floor, in case grannie was taking any ailment, or I could find time and opportunity to see my old friends; for I would not like to vex her by taking up my lodging in another dwelling."

This hint begat an expectation that Andrew would probably soon visit Stoneyholm; but when it was known there that he was elected a Member of Parliament, the hope was abandoned; and yet the master continued to declare that he could see no change which the elevation had produced in his letters, "For they continue," said he, "as leil-hearted as ever."

Old Martha herself did not rightly understand

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in what the dignity consisted, but said, "I hope it's no ill, nor ony thing about the Court, where a' sin and corruption abounds. Indeed, I needna be feart o' that, for Andrew, poor fallow, was ne'er cut out for prancing on skeigh horses, or gieing the word o' command to rampaging dragoons, and men of renown, that are proud and mighty in battle."

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CHAPTER VIII.

POLITICS.

During the winter after our hero's election, and before the meeting of Parliament, Lord and Lady Sandyford came to town, much, however, against their own wishes. But his Lordship had been persuaded by some of his old friends, public characters whom he esteemed, that he ought to resume his duty as a peer.

On this occasion the Marquis of Avonside, who, in all things, was a conscientious observer of forms, deemed it necessary, soon after their arrival, to issue cards for a splendid party, in order to exhibit them in their state of reunion to the friends of his family. Among the nobility invited, both as a matter of course,

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and from a wish to bring Lord Riversdale again forward in public life, were several members of the ministry. But the Viscount had pre-determined never to form any political connexion, and when made acquainted with the names and titles of the expected guests, almost resolved to leave London for a time, rather than be present; although the occasion was one which his father endeavoured to convince him involved, in many respects, the honour of his sister. How it should have been supposed to do so, we have never properly understood; at the same time, he agreed with the Marquis, that a general congregation of all the leading members of the Avonside and Sandyford families, was a fitting and expedient manner of shewing to the world the satisfaction with which the reconciliation was considered. Before, however, finally deciding as to the part he would perform, Lord Riversdale went to Sandyford-house, to consult the Earl on the subject, and on being shewn into the library, found his Lordship sitting with our hero.

After some general observations as to the state

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of the weather, the prelude to all business between Englishmen, except when they meet at Chalk-farm, or any other ultimatum of honour,—on these occasions, we believe it is not according to etiquette to criticise the appearance of the morning,—Lord Riversdale mentioned to the Earl his embarrassment at the idea of renewing his acquaintance with the statesmen alluded to, adding, that nothing but his regard for Lady Sandyford and his Lordship, would induce him for a moment to hesitate.

The Earl rather pitied the sensitive Viscount, than respected him; for he could discern beneath his extreme delicacy of sentiment, much of the hereditary weakness of the Marquis, his father, and used indeed to say that Riversdale's fine sense of political virtue was but a cutaneous irritation of the mind. However, he listened to him with great gravity, and when the Viscount had made an end of his case, he put on a face of serious consideration, and then said,—"In a matter of such importance, I am not, my dear Lord, qualified to give you any advice; for, never having been a decided

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political character myself, being, indeed, almost in doubt whether I am now considered as belonging to the ministerial or opposition side of the House, I cannot enter into your feelings; but I dare say our friend, the member here, may be able to understand the importance of so grave a question."

"I should never once have thought of speaking to him," replied the Viscount, querulously; "for going into the House under my father's auspices, he has, of course, linked himself to his Lordship's party, and will, no doubt, be as anxious to strengthen their number and influence, as the Marquis himself."

Lord Sandyford smiled at this attack, and enjoyed the anticipation of a retort.

"'Deed my Lord," cried our hero, "ye're all wrong. I came in on my own pock nook, as we say in Scotland, when a man lives on his own means—and I wish your Lordship no to go away in the belief, that, as a member of Parliament, I hold myself at the good-will of either prince or potentate, peer or prelate. It's true, I mean to

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uphold and assist the King and constitution, to the best of my judgment. But——?

"I beg your pardon, Mr Wylie, I meant no offence," exclaimed Riversdale. "On public affairs, and the principles and characters of public men, every one is free to speak. You virtually, indeed, acknowledge yourself to be wedded to my father's party; and therefore I am justified in thinking that, like his Lordship, you are naturally anxious to strengthen that party."

Lord Sandyford looked seriously at the member, apprehensive that the morbid Viscount had gone too far; but our hero, with a significant smile, re-established his confidence.

"It's very true," replied Wylie, "that I naturally wish to strengthen the influence of what you call my party, but the means of doing that lie in the common sense of the country at large. It's no to be done by votes of members, but by satisfying public opinion—which is the God of the political world. And, my Lord Riversdale, since ye think yoursel a public man, and wasna blate in expressing what ye thought of me as an-

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other; allow me to say, that I do not think my party would be strengthened by the like—I'll no say of you—but of any man who thinks himself privileged to indulge his own humours in the service of the commonweal, or no to serve it at all, just as the wind sits with him."

The Earl, afraid that if he allowed the Viscount to reply, the conversation would become still more acute, although he perceived that the member's resentment was satisfied in giving this rebuke, interposed, and said briskly, "I suspect, Wylie, that some part of your animadversions were levelled at me, who, among other dereliction, must reckon the slackened interest that I have for years taken in public affairs."

"As for that," replied Andrew, laughing, "I never attached much importance to your Lordship as a politician; for you are one of those who are naturally born to be in opposition."

"Born!" exclaimed the Earl; "who ever heard of such philosophy?"

"I should be sorry if ony sic blethers as philosophy were in what I mean. The world's made

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up of two sort of folk—men of deeds, and men of thought. The men of deeds have aye had the upper hand, and will keep it to the day of judgment; the men of thought are those that scheme, and those that find fault; and the ends and purposes of the men o' deeds, are to carry into effect the suggestions of the one under the correction of the other. Your Lordship is no just one of the schemers, nor exactly a fault-finder, but ye're made up of the elements of both, and all your speculations would naturally make you an adversary to the men of deeds; and, of course, in opposition to those in authority and power."

"What says the Stagyrite on that, Riversdale?" said the Earl, laughing. "By the shade of the mighty Julius, I have never heard half so good an account of the necessary and natural institution of a parliamentary opposition; and I am persuaded there is some truth in the theory. Indeed I never heard of a regular opposition man that, in private life, was an agreeable man of business, however intelligent as such—a proof that he was deficient in some of those conciliatory bu-

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siness qualities, which, in the management of public affairs, are of as much importance as talents. But Wylie, as, according to this notion of your's, if I am constrained by nature to be in opposition, even although not belonging decidedly either to the schemers or the fault-finders, I must of course be an inferior among them. You give me but sorry encouragement to re-enter the arena of public life."

"Your Lordship," replied Andrew, with animation, "would make a very good king in a limited monarchy, where the constitution so works, that the sovereign has never the entire upper hand. But in any other post of power, I have my doubts that you would sometimes be gien to the breaking of old and sacred things, for the pleasure of mending them; and may be, now and then, trying the mouth of the horse, by pulling his bridle unnecessarily. No, my Lord, ye're no qualified to shine as a statesman—I never thought it, since ye will have my opinion, though no one can mair admire your pleasant talents. Your mind is ower fine for daily use; something coarser

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is wanted for the toil and moil, the jangling and the banter of public life; and your wisest way, as ye have no chance of being a king of the kind I was speaking anent, is to be the next thing till't. Settle yourself in the princely house of Chastington, with your Leddy, and there, like two patriarchs, beget sons and daughters; and ye'll serve your country better in fostering the comforts of the tenantry around you, than by a' the speeches that ye're able to speak, though ye were ten times better at the art than Pitt and Fox, and a' the rest of them carded through-ither."

"Yes!" exclaimed Lord Sandyford, surprised at the superiority thus assumed and felt, while he was amused at its simplicity,—"Yes, my friend, you are right—I am not fit for public life—I have been long conscious of the truth, and I will take your advice—I see it's wisdom, and I obey its influence.—So you see, Riversdale, as there is no chance of the ministry charming you into their party, they are likely, by my abandoning the intention of re-entering Parliament, to

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gain as much by this consultation, as if you were already spell-bound to their service."

The Viscount did not much relish the insinuation, but struck with the remarks which had fallen from our hero, said, "I think, Mr. Wylie, considering what has passed, you may tell me in which of your two great classes you place me. The result may be as decisive as with his Lordship."

"I dinna think so," replied Wylie; "ye're no made of such malleable metal. But though I canna say just what ye are, knowing so little of you, I'll undertake to tell your fortune. When the Marquis is a little mair failed, ye'll be called up to the House of Peers; and I'll no despair of hearing you move the address, in answer to the speech from the throne, in the first session after."

Lord Sandyford threw himself back in his chair, unable to control his laughter, while the astonished Viscount changed colour.

"Look at his feet, Riversdale," exclaimed the Earl, "look at his feet. They must be cloven."

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"Noo, an ye had the decision of character which the Earl possesses," said Andrew, rising to take his leave, "ye would just at once, on this spot, not only resolve to take your place at your father's table, along with the ministers, but ask them, before they quit the house, to summon you to the Peers, because ye dislike the coarse manners, and the turbulent debates of the Commons. It will come with you to that at last, and there's no apostacy in't; for the French Revolution, that ye set out, as I have heard, with worshipping, has apostatized to such a degree, that the question is no longer, whether mankind are entitled to have liberty or equality, but whether they shall submit to a military despotism. When things are brought back to the state of the golden age of the Eighty-nine, ye may indulge your philanthropic politics. But till then, my Lord, ye may, with a safe conscience, support any ministers in this country, that set themselves against the domineering insolence of a pack of licentious adventurers, that hae no other object in view but to riot at Paris, like our own sailors at Ports-

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mouth or Plymouth, when they receive prize-money."

And with this the conversation and interview ended; for Riversdale came away at the same time with our hero, and as they walked down Lower Grosvenor-Street, tried to convince him, that having once abandoned Parliament, it would be inconsistent to take any part again in public life; to all which, Andrew only remarked, "Weel, weel, my Lord; but make no rash vows, and think on what I was saying."

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CHAPTER IX.

A PLOT.

When Lord Riversdale and our hero had retired from Sandyford-house, the Earl felt himself irresistibly inclined to play them both a little prank. Accordingly, he soon after went to pay a morning visit to the Marquis, with the view of ascertaining who were to be of his grand party.

"I am not sure," said his Lordship, with affected seriousness, in conversing on the subject with the old peer, "that it will exactly do for me to meet so many of your ministerial friends. Your Lordship knows that I have had some intention of resuming my Parliamentary duties, and that I have always been considered as belonging to the Whig side of the House."

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"That doubt," replied the Marquis, with a complacent smile, "shews, indeed, to which side of the House your Lordship belongs; for none of ours would ever think his character or principles likely to become questionable, by meeting in private life with even the most violent and distinguished of your leaders."

"Nay," said Lord Sandyford, "I had no doubts on the subject till Riversdale called this morning, evidently so much in a vacillating perplexity, that our friend Wylie advised him to ask the minister at once to summon him to the Peers."

"You don't say so?" exclaimed the Marquis, with delighted surprise.

"I do indeed, my Lord," was the answer; "and it is therefore under some apprehension, that the event may be consummated when Riversdale meets the minister, that a regard for the delicacy of my own political reputation makes me question the propriety of being of the party."

"It is very surprising," replied the Marquis, with solemnity, "that Riversdale has never hinted any thing to me on the subject. He cannot but know the pleasure and satisfaction which I

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shall receive, on learning that he has at last returned to a due sense of his duty as a member of the British nobility."

"I beg your Lordship's pardon," said the Earl, still preserving the gravest countenance possible. "Riversdale has not decidedly made up his mind; on the contrary, he is as diffident as a young lady before giving her consent, and some few caresses from the minister may yet be requisite to complete his conversion. But, my Lord, among your expected guests, I do not recollect that you have named Wylie."

"He is not invited," was the answer.

"Indeed?" replied Lord Sandyford, with well affected coldness, "I thought, considering the part he has played in the drama, of which this said dinner is the denouement, his absence will be a blank. Lady Sandyford will be hugely disappointed."

"It did not strike me in that light before," said the Marquis; "but I will instantly send him a card, though, between ourselves, my Lord, his manners are not just in unison with those of the company I expect."

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"You will particularly oblige me by inviting him," rejoined the Earl; "and I am persuaded that were he brought more into society with Riversdale, the conversion, to which your Lordship looks forward with so much solicitude, will be the sooner accomplished."

The Marquis, although naturally dull, saw through the quizzical humour of his son-in-law; and laughing, said, "Really, Sandyford, I know not what to make of you; but has Riversdale in any degree changed his opinions?"

"In truth, my Lord, I very much suspect he has unconsciously—at least Wylie thinks he will soon change; and I place great reliance on his discernment and sagacity. I would therefore advise your Lordship to give the minister a hint."

"Well, well, but joking aside," cried the delighted father, "how does it happen that you, a Whig, should be so anxious to be rid, as it were, of Riversdale."

"Because," replied the Earl, "when I get into office, I shall employ only the sound and true of our own party; and I have my doubts of Riversdale."

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The Marquis again perceived that the Earl was playing with him, and said, "I see how it is, Sandyford; you have some motive for wishing to see your friend, the member, along with the minister; and all this is but a manœuvre for some sinister purpose that you do not choose to explain."

"I am sure," replied the Earl, laughing, "your Lordship cannot suspect I entertain any hope that Wylie, by being brought into social contact with the Heaven-born Statesman, will return home a Whig, or think less of him as a man than as a minister?"

"You are a most extraordinary puzzle, Sandyford," said the Marquis. "Knowing as I do what your party say of my distinguished friend, I should not be surprised were you to confess that you really entertain some expectation of seeing Wylie's confidence shaken in the minister's talents, by witnessing how much that eminent person can bend to the common level of human nature in the friendly moments of convivial ease; for I have all along suspected that you were not satisfied to find Wylie arrayed on our side."

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"Ah, my Lord, that was a bold stroke of yours; and certainly I have no reason to be pleased that he has turned a Tory," replied the Earl waggishly; but, in truth, he had never given the subject a moment's reflection.

"Yes," said the Marquis, rubbing his hands with glee; "I do take some credit to myself for that, as I doubt not your Lordship did intend to return him on your own interest. A man of his talents was not to be lost to the country."

The Earl was amused at the idea of the Marquis, in supposing that the integrity of Wylie's character was so pliant as to be moulded by any Parliamentary connexion; and said coldly, as if in resentment for the reflection implied on the Opposition, but in reality to prolong his trifling with the self-complacency of the old peer, "The loss to the country is by the side he has chosen."

The Marquis immediately explained, or, in better English, made an apology, and, of course, the conversation was changed; for the good nature of Lord Sandyford would not allow him to dally longer with trifles, to which the Marquis attached the most serious importance, and with

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which he could not go farther, without the risk of encroaching on feelings and prejudices, that it would have been as hopeless as cruel to have attempted to change or controvert. The consequence, however, of this conversation, was an immediate invitation to our hero, and a visit the same afternoon from the Marquis to the minister to intimate, that, by a few particular attentions, he had some reason to hope Lord Riversdale would be found not altogether incorrigible in his political heresies.

The minister, engrossed with the arduous tasks of his great office during a period of rapid changes and awful events, knew little of the character of Lord Riversdale. He only recollected, that several years before, when his Lordship entered Parliament, he had heard him spoken of as a young nobleman of very promising talents, but infected with revolutionary opinions. He was therefore pleased to receive so favourable an account of the state of his sentiments, and congratulated the Marquis on the prospect of seeing the good old English principles of his family inherited by a son able and qualified to support them with vigour and dignity.

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In the meantime Lady Sandyford had received an account from the Earl of the conversations of the morning, and freely acknowledged that her opinions, both as to his character and that of her brother, coincided with those of our hero; while she could not refrain from jocularly remonstrating with his Lordship for indulging his waggery at the expence of her father, whom she was apprehensive might in consequence be brought into some awkward dilemma with the minister.

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CHAPTER X.

A STATESMAN.

Our hero, on the day of the Marquis of Avonside's banquet, arrived a short time before Lord and Lady Sandyford. The principal guests were already assembled; and among them the Premier, with several of the other ministers who had received invitations. When Andrew was announced, his name, as one of the Marquis's new members, naturally excited the attention of the politicians; and he perceived, on entering the drawing-room, that his appearance did not produce the most reverential impression on the minor statesmen. But the Minister, with that bright and penetrating look for which he was so remarkable, darted at him a keen and inquisitive glance; and,

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as soon as Andrew had made his bow to their noble host, crossed the floor towards him. "His strides," as our hero himself described them, "were as stiff and as long as a splinkey laddie's stalking on stilts;" and, without being introduced, he immediately entered into conversation with him, in so condescending a manner that Wylie felt it as particular.

The acute and pedagogue aspect of that great man was not calculated to conciliate at first sight; but there was a charm in the urbanity of his voice, and the full rounded harmony of his language, which almost persuaded the stranger that the meagre anatomy of his figure was invested with magnificence and dignity. The moment that the Premier spoke, our hero felt the full force of its influence; and for some time stood overpowered, at once by its effects and the sense of an affability too artificial to be agreeable. The calm sustained voice and measured sentences gave him, indeed, a feeling of the existence of a faculty far superior to the more various and impassioned eloquence which occasionally burst from Lord Sandyford; but under all the acquired habits and accomplishments of the minis-

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ter, he intuitively discovered that lofty pride which constituted the hard features of his character, and he would have retreated from his condescension. This, however, the other was determined not to permit; for he had made himself in some degree acquainted with the history and talents of all the new members returned at the late election, and had received a strong impression, but not altogether a correct one—for it was chiefly from the Marquis—of the professional address and general ability of our hero, and was resolved to cultivate his acquaintance particularly.

He had therefore, as we have mentioned, immediately addressed him in a distinguished manner,—flatteringly on those topics with which he conceived him to be best informed. But neither by professional subjects—nor by public affairs—nor by the principles of political economy—nor by the beauties of classic literature—nor by the ancient or modern history of England, or of Europe—no, not by one of all the different tests which he was in the practice of applying to strangers, especially to young members of Parliament,

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did the Minister obtain a single answer, that in any degree corresponded with the opinion he had been taught to form of Wylie's intelligence and sagacity; and he was on the point of turning away from him, to inquire of the Marquis if this was indeed the new member for Bidfort, of whom his Lordship had spoken in terms of such admiration and respect, when Lord and Lady Sandyford were announced.

The moment the Earl entered the room, he saw Andrew's embarrassment, as he stood with the Premier, like, as his Lordship often said, a guinea-pig beside a cameleopard in the plates of some cheap edition of Buffon, and almost immediately joined them.

The Minister was slightly acquainted with the Earl, he had heard of his talents, and he knew his history. He accordingly addressed him in his best and freest manner; insomuch, that our hero could not but admire the tact and spirit with which his Lordship's peculiarities were so dexterously treated, while at the same time he was unconsciously obliged to notice the striking contrast

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between the elegant natural freedom of his patron, and the formal and elaborated affability of the statesman.

When the first salutations were over, the Earl looked merrily at Andrew, as he said to the Minister, "I hope my friend Wylie is to move the address on the King's speech? He looks as if you had been saying he was expected to do so!"

"If it would afford any gratification to your Lordship that Mr Wylie should undertake the task, an arrangement may be made for that purpose," replied the Minister.

The Earl bowed, and said, with a smile that was felt as it was meant, "I can have no wish to interfere with any ministerial arrangement;" and he added, in a still gayer strain, "But I should like to hear what view my friend would take of the expediency of continuing the war, the usual topic on such occasions."

"I fancy," replied Andrew, "that there can be little doubt of that expediency for a twelvemonth or so yet."

"Yet!" exclaimed the Minister, struck both with the word and the manner in which it was

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said,—"Do you then think that the continuance of the war ought not to be regulated by events?—ought not to be contingent on the development of circumstances?—and that it is so governed by natural laws as to partake in some degree of the nature and duration of an organized existence?"

"Just so, sir," replied the new member, "for all the wild fire of the French Revolution is burnt out; and Boney, the sorrow, though he calls himself a consul, is just a king; all things are settling into a kingly order again, but no of a peaceable sort; on that account, a peace is, I'm thinking, the only way of carrying on the war."

"How so?" said Lord Sandyford, interested by the remark, and by the effect which it seemed to produce on the statesman.

"Because," replied our hero, "the frame of government that's now in France is the creature of the public opinion which was begotten out of the events of the war; and it is only adapted for a state of tribulation and warfare; and, therefore, if ye wish to see the downfal of Boney's dominion, ye must subject it to a change of public opinion, the which change will grow out of a state of peace

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But I have a notion that it's no just expedient yet to come to terms with him; he must be alloot to feel himsel more settled; ye must give him length of rope, that he may grow a little more unbearable before ye make peace; for it's only by letting the wud deevil o' a body believe it may do what it likes, that ye're to wile him and his legions into the snare o' destruction. His power is only to be cast down by his own folly; and ye maun submit to make peace belyve, just to let the world see that his system is no one which can be endured in peace. In short, it's my conceit that there can be no durable peace contracted with rampageous soldiers; and what will France do with all her armies in a time of peace? She'll just gang again to war, and the world will rise in a rage to put her down, as a wild beast that must be driven into a den and muzzled there."

The Minister said nothing; but when Lady Sandyford came up, and drew Andrew aside to speak to him concerning some little affair that she wished him to do for her, he remained for some time thoughtful, and then addressed himself to Lord Sandyford, saying, "Mr Wylie has placed

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the expediency of making peace with France in a singular point of view. I perceive that he deserves his high character; although he is in acquirements far below mediocrity, and in the ostensible glitter of talent greatly inferior to many men, who can form no such conception of that policy which future considerations may render it expedient to adopt."

Dinner was announced; and in taking his seat at the table, the Minister placed himself beside our hero, and treated him with that freedom which constituted one of the powerful charms of his private life.

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CHAPTER XI.

A PROSELYTE.

Lord Riversdale, from a presentiment arising either from the prediction of our hero, or from some consciousness of a change within himself, which he was averse to acknowledge, did not make his appearance in the drawing-room; and in taking his seat at the dinner-table, kept as far aloof as possible from the Minister, in order to avoid the seduction of his attentions. The Earl of Sandyford suspecting the Viscount's feelings, and his own playful disposition having been renewed to a boyish gaiety, from the time of his re-union with the Countess, he could not resist the temptation of bringing him at once into communion with the stately Premier. Accordingly, as

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he happened to sit next Riversdale, he observed to him that his acknowledgments to the Minister's salutation were so cold and distant, that it must have attracted the notice of all present; and that people might think it weak of him to infringe the reciprocities of social life by such a decided manifestation of political prejudice. This was quite enough to make Riversdale change his whole demeanour:—from that moment he used innumerable little artifices of address to engage the attention of the statesman, and not long without effect, for the quick eye and quicker mind of the Minister almost instantaneously discovered that Riversdale was actuated by some motive; and under the impression which the Marquis had given him of a change in the Viscount's opinions, he attributed his attentions to that source. A most delightful equivoque of deference and submission on the part of the Viscount, and of compliments and courtesies on that of the Premier, was in consequence performed between them, to the infinite amusement of Lord Sandyford. Things, indeed, went so far, that our hero became interested in the

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result; not, however, suspecting the cause, till he happened to observe the arch roguery with which the Earl was watching the progress of the scene.

"I think that Lord Riversdale," said the member, whisperingly to the Minister, "would not be ill-pleased to move the address in the Peers—ye should give him a summons."

This was somewhat in a plainer and more point blank style than statesmen are accustomed to receive suggestions; but the Premier had by this time formed a correct opinion of Wylie's downright character, and observed, laughingly, at perceiving that the motives of his reciprocities with Riversdale were so clearly seen through, "Will you propose the thing to him?"

"I'll no object to do that; but ye should first try to shew him that ye're no continuing the war against the liberties of mankind," was the reply.

The Minister was still more diverted by this remark, and said, "In that case, I can employ no better argument than your own in the drawing-room."

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Lord Sandyford, observing the under tone in which this brief dialogue was carried on, partly guessed the subject, and shook his head significantly to Wylie; nothing farther, however, took place while the ladies remained at table, for the Minister began to condole with the Duchess of Dashingwell, who sat at his right hand, on the necessity he should be under of imposing some new tax, affecting to consult her Grace whether cats as well as dogs might not be rendered productive to the revenue, amusing her with his badinage, to which, with a sort of jocular good taste, he gave an air of official formality, that was admirably in character with his own peculiar manners.

When the ladies had retired, he took an opportunity to advert to some recent explosion of popular feeling, remarking with sincerity, that, prior to the American war, the European governments were so strong, that they undervalued insurrections; but that since the French Revolution, there was some danger of falling into the opposite error, and that many of the harmless ebullitions

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of the populace ran the risk of being considered as political dangers. The perfect clearness, beauty, and candour, with which this was stated, excited the admiration of all present, and was in charming unison with the sentiments of Lord Riversdale. Even the Earl of Sandyford, who had no particular esteem for the Minister, was delighted alike with the liberality of the sentiment, and the inimitable elegance and perspicuity of the illustrations. Our hero alone had any suspicion of the design for which it was made; but he sat also in admiration, less, however, of the matter, than of the address of the speaker.

The conversation then naturally diverged to subjects connected with popular governments, in which the Earl bore a distinguished part, and expressed himself on the vanity of popularity, with such perfect grace, that every one who heard him, deplored, in their own minds, that such superior talents should have so long been misapplied. In illustration of his opinions, he repeated,—

"For what is glory, but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmixed?

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And what the people, but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
Of whom, to be dispraised, were no small praise?"

"Were it not," said the Minister, "that Milton was a republican, I should think, from the rhythm and dignity of these verses, that they were of his composition.—Is it an imitation by your Lordship?"

"They are really Milton's," replied the Earl; "and these sentiments, he ascribes to the Saviour, in answer to the temptations of Satan, and in his work which he most esteemed,—Paradise Regained."

"If that's the case, they must have been dictated by a penitent spirit, for he would not put any thing in the mouth of the Saviour, that he did not believe nor venerate," said our hero. "He may, in his younger days, have been a republican, like many other clever lads; but I doubt,

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with such notions of the instability of popular opinion, he didna depart this life in that delusion." And in saying this, Andrew looked across the table to Lord Riversdale, who sat in a state of strange pleasure, at hearing it so ingeniously averred, that Milton had probably lived to repent his republican enthusiasm.

Wylie's remark gave the Minister his clue, and with that felicity of exposition, which transcended all Greek and Roman fame in oratory, he took, in his most captivating colloquial manner, a general view of the progress of the French Revolution, and dexterously interweaving the suggestions of our hero, with respect to the continuance of the war, demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of Lord Riversdale, that whatever was the opinion of the opponents of Government, as to the origin of the war on the part of England, the apostacy of France from her own principles had been so decided in its character, so violent in its effects, and had carried her so far, or, as Mr Burke said of that emigration of opinions which characterize the new Whigs, had so transported her beyond

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Aurora and the Ganges, that England, merely by remaining stationary in her principles, was evidently become the champion of whatever existed in the world, of liberty, of order, and of honour.

The effect of this exposition was irresistible on the wavering mind of Riversdale, and when Parliament met, the prophecy of Wylie was in the main part fulfilled. His Lordship was called up to the Peers by summons, and though he did not move the address, yet he took his place on the ministerial side of the House, without exciting the slightest observation. His old friends had, indeed, been accustomed for years to consider him as entirely alienated from their party, or rather as having never joined it, while the members of his father's side, regarded his accession as the natural result of the hereditary politics of the family. Much, therefore, as the Marquis of Avonside esteemed our hero, for the part he had taken in the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Sandyford, he regarded the conversion of his son as conferring a far greater obligation, especially when the Minister informed his Lordship, that he considered it

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to have been effected by the singular shrewdness with which Wylie had thrown out the hints that had enabled himself to speak with so much effect to the undecided dispositions of the Viscount.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE DISCLOSURE.

Fortune poured her cornucopia so liberally around our hero, that honours and riches seemed to lie at his acceptance; for although no particular appearance of patronage was shewn to himself on the part of Lord and Lady Sandyford, still they both felt themselves so much his debtors, that the powerful influence of their respective relations and connexions was unweariedly exerted to promote his advancement. They often, however, remarked to each other, that there was something about him which could not be easily explained. The Earl had at one time imagined that his rigid frugality was dictated by a sordid desire of riches; but the warmth of feeling which

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he had shewn on so many different occasions had long obliterated every relic of that opinion; and he saw that Wylie could not only be liberal, but even more—munificent. Once or twice it occurred to his Lordship, that there was a degree of system in the simplicity of his manners, strangely at variance with his vanity in cultivating the acquaintance of persons of rank and fashion.

"I have an idea," said he, in speaking on the subject one day to the Countess, "to confer on him what I think he will esteem an honour; for it appears to me, that he attaches more value to those things which give him personal consequence than to any sort of pecuniary favours."

What his Lordship meant was not then explained; but some time after, when the Countess had presented him with an heir, he declared his intention to nominate Wylie one of the sponsors. "For," said the Earl, "as we have no chance of getting a fairy now-a-days, I do not think we shall be able to do better."

The Countess smiled, and said gravely, "I shall rejoice to obtain so honest a friend for our dear boy, and pledged to be his friend by the sacred

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obligation of the baptismal vows; but if Wylie is a Presbyterian, I fear, from the integrity of his character, that he will decline your offer."

At this juncture of the conversation, the Duchess of Dashingwell happened to call, and on the subject being mentioned, her Grace said, "Like Lord Sandyford, I, too, have remarked, that beneath his simplicity, he has not only the slyness of a fox, but the ambition of an ancient personage, too shocking to be named to ears polite."

"Sometimes," interposed the Countess, "it has occurred to me, when I have observed the indifference with which he regarded our female friends, that he had formed some secret attachment."

"Your Ladyship," cried the Duchess, "has hit the right mark. I do now remember something of the sort; and the wizard of a creature had the power not only to make me his confidante, but by some irresistible spell to constrain me to become his advocate. I do not well recollect what ensued, or how the matter ended; but I have at this moment in my mind's eye a beautiful Scottish girl, at one of my assemblies, leaning on the arm

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of an old maiden-aunt, who had a neck like a bundle of bamboo-canes. I forget their names, and all other circumstances—Bless me! what a memory I have!—But Wylie was up to the ears in love with the niece—I think he said from childhold. We must put him to the question on the subject."

While her Grace was thus rattling away with her wonted good humour, the Earl and Countess exchanged expressive glances. Neither of them were inclined to explain before the Duchess what was passing in their minds; but when she had retired, his Lordship exclaimed, "The Duchess of Dashingwell is certainly as arrant a chattel, as ever constituted any part of household furniture. But a bright flake or two of observation fell from her in this last shower of talk, that has thrown some new light on Wylie's conduct. If it be true that he was in love some years ago, I would bet ten to one we shall discover some equally wise and romantic motive at the bottom of the principles, by which he has been so long and so constantly actuated. But we must treat him warily."

While our hero was thus the subject of conver-

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sation, he was announced; and after the first salutations were over, and while he was admiring the infant in the lap of its mother, the Earl said to him, "Wylie, will you have any objection to stand godfather to the little fellow?"

"I doubt," replied Andrew, "it's no in my power. I am no sure of the nature of godfathers and godmothers. But ye shouldna think that I thereby cast any reflection either on them or the other prelatic doxies of the English. But though I cannot accept the great honour your Lordship has propounded, gude forgive me if I say, that sponsors are forbidden in the ten commands."

The Earl looked and smiled to Lady Sundyford, and then said, in his most generous manner, "This rigid principle teaches me to respect you more than ever; and I now suspect, Wylie, that the state of self-denial in which you live has its foundation in some nobler motive than I have yet been able to discover. I have never heard you speak of your family, nor have you once asked my interest in behalf of any friend."

Andrew blushed slightly at this remark, and said, "I have no friends to fash your Lordship about."

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"But," resumed the Earl, in a gayer tone, "the Duchess of Dashingwell, who was here this morning, has been telling us, that she recollects something of your being in love several years ago."

The confusion with which our hero looked, left no doubt in the mind of the Earl of the fact; and he was on the point of saying in banter, "Have you been slighted?" when, suddenly recollecting the humility of the condition from which he had himself raised him, he checked the levity of his manner, and said affectionately, "If there are any circumstances in your attachment that our influence can improve or change, why do you not explain yourself? Lady Sandyford and myself owe you a debt which we can never adequately repay. You should add to your other kindnesses, the favour of letting us know in what manner we can contribute to your happiness."

Our hero felt that he had now at last attained the summit, for which he had so long and so perseveringly struggled. Without hereditary connexions—without the advantages of education—and without the possession of any of that splen-

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dour of talent, which is deemed so essential to success in the path of honourable distinction, he had acquired a degree of personal consequence that placed him on a level with Mary Cunningham; and for the first time, not only to any friend, but also to himself, did he avow the force of that attachment, which, in the earnest pursuit of the means to indulge and to dignify, he had scarcely allowed himself to cherish, even while it constituted the actuating principle of his life. Lord and Lady Sandyford admired the delicacy with which he acknowledged the secret motive of his preference for the society of the elegant and the noble, when he described the lowliness of his own original condition, contrasted with the rank of the Craigland family. "But now," said he, "if you will complete the work, which, unknown to yourselves, you have patronized so long, I would fain beg of you to lend your countenance to gain for me some portion of that consideration among my old friends, which neither money nor manners can command. In short, my Lord and Leddy, by the blessing of Heaven, through your instrumentality, I am now in a condition to make proposals to Miss Cun-

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ningham; but she belongs to an ancient family, and beforehand I would like to satisfy both her and her friends, that I do not presume altogether on the weight of my purse, to think myself no disparagement to their pride and antiquity. But there's another thing—It's no my design to make any proposals to her, if I think that either the world's pelf or patronage would alone rule her to accept me."

"That," said the Earl, "is really carrying your refinement a little too far. How are you to discover that she is to be won by any purer influence? Have you any reason to believe that the attachment is mutual?"

"I'll no be so self-conceited as to say," replied Wylie; "but we have had some colleaguing together, which, if remembered in the spirit of kindness, will be quite satisfactory to me."

And he then recounted those incidents of his early history which we have so circumstantially described; but with so much more wit and humour, that both his Lordship and the Countess were ready to expire with laughter; and declared,

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that, as soon as Lord Chestington was christened, they would accompany him to Scotland, for the express purpose of being introduced to the worthies of the Craiglands and Stonyholm.

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CHAPTER XIII.

INTENTIONS.

The Countess of Sandyford, after the important disclosure described in the preceding Chapter, reflected with an anxiety to which gratitude lent a sentiment of affection, on every means to facilitate the attainment of our hero's object. And among others, it occurred to her, that if a Baronetcy could be procured for him, it would give a stamp and permanency to his elevation, that could not fail to produce great effects on the hereditary prejudices of the Cunninghams. But there were in this many difficulties; for the delicacy of the Earl, with respect to political favours, would not allow him to move in the business; she even feared that it might induce him to interdict her from seeking the

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honour through any other channel, although that of her father presented one easy and obvious. Still so great was her solicitude on this subject, that she could not help saying one day, as they were talking together of their intended journey to Scotland, "I think it would be a great feather in Wylie's cap, if my father would only take it into his head to obtain for him a baronetcy."

"That I have no doubt his Lordship will do, on the slightest hint, were Wylie once provided with an adequate estate; it would undoubtedly be of consequence to him as a lover."

"I have a great mind to speak to my father. Do you think I may do so?" said the Countess, shrewdly.

"O, yes," exclaimed the Earl, "I'll speak to him myself; for, as I am now done with all political questions, I feel no impropriety on the subject."

His Lordship then explained to her, that, in consequence of Wylie's advice, he had resolved to devote his life to promote the happiness and prosperity of his own tenantry, as the best way of ser-

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ving his country; being fully convinced, that, although perhaps able to make some figure in public life, he was not fit to take any commanding station, and a subordinate neither his rank nor his feelings would allow him to accept. The Countess, who had also been taught by experience, that he was indeed too eager and sensitive to bear those quips and scorns of the time, to which statesmen are exposed, considered the part which Wylie had taken in promoting this judicious determination, as not one of the least obligations which he had laid them under. And she said, "I wish that you could persuade him to make a purchase in our neighbourhood. Castle-Rooksborough is still for sale. It has many claims on our remembrance. There I performed the first purely benevolent action of my life—in taking the child of the unhappy Ferrers under my protection; and from that day, and on that spot, began the series of events, which, however troubled at first, have brought us such mutual happiness."

The Earl embraced her with emotion, and said, "It is a place I shall ever love, and it will grow

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still more dear to me, if we can induce our friend to take up his residence there; for I suspect, that were he married to Miss Cunningham, he will not long remain a Londoner. I fear, however, that he will prefer Scotland. But let us make the trial."

Accordingly, the Earl, soon after this conversation, spoke to our hero, and urged him to buy Castle-Rooksborough. "If you have not money enough," said his Lordship, "as my incumbrances are now nearly paid off, it may be easily managed."

The mind of our hero had never contemplated any acquisition so magnificent. In the most sanguine of his reveries, he had never looked much beyond the dignity of an ordinary Ayrshire laird; and in reply to the Earl, he said, "I'm thinking, my Lord, that ye give me credit for higher pretensions than I ever entertained; and I have already provided myself with a bit ground in the North. The late Laird o' Wylie gaed last year a' to pigs and whistles, and the property being for sale, I directed an acquaintance in Edinburgh,

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Mr Threeper, who is an advocate there, to attend the roup, by the which, as he writes me this morning, I am now the Wylie of that Ilk."

"But," said the Earl, with a feeling of disappointment, "you may buy Castle-Rooksborough too."

"It's far from my hand," was the reply.

"Then I'll tell you what, assist me to raise the money, and I'll buy Castle-Rooksborough. The price will not reduce my income half so low as it was when I first retired to Chastington-hall. I have had no means of gratifying Lady Sandyford in any wish before, and she has taken a fancy to that place; but she would be content were you the purchaser. Perhaps, if you prove a thriving wooer, we might get you, in neighbourliness, to reside occasionally there."

Our hero, when the Earl adverted to the effect which the purchase would have on his own income, made a slight convulsive movement, for he perceived that his Lordship had resolved to buy the estate, not so much to gratify the Countess, as with a view of giving it to him; but he took no notice of what he suspected, observing only, that

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no doubt, his Lordship might now easily raise the money; adding, however, in a way which convinced the Earl that his intention was discovered, "Nor, my Lord, will it be any great loss, for the rental of Castle-Rooksborough will no make the bargain all dead loss. I will, however, be plain with your Lordship. Within myself I feel that were the object of my ambition attained, or found impossible to gain, I shall then have but small cause to continue in this part of the country, for I have ever looked to taking my rest among the scenes of my young days; for still, in my thought, the mornings there are brighter than those I have seen in any other place—the evenings far grander, and the nights thicker set with stars. It is but a boy's fancy; but to me, in all my prosperity, it has been like the shepherd's clothes of the honest man that was made a vizier, as I have read in a book, called the Pleasing Instructor. I have treasured it in my heart, where others hoard their dearest wishes, and I could never part with it now, without forgetting myself. However, come what come may out of our journey to Scotland, I'll pay your Lordship a yearly visitation, just

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an it were for no more than to keep me in remembrance of the humble state from which you have raised me."

Lord Sandyford was so much affected by the sensibility with which this was said, that he pressed the hand of Wylie, and retired without speaking.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE BARONETCY.

In the meantime, the Countess, intent to procure the honour of a baronetcy for her friend, had been closetted with her father, the Marquis, on the subject. She was well aware of his Lordship's peculiarities; and knew that if she immediately requested him to ask the title, he would, in all probability, have raised many objections, and probably in the end refused. A woman of address, and now awakened to the consciousness of all her ascendant faculties, she attacked his Lordship in the most effectual manner. Before broaching the subject, she inquired how her brother, Lord Riversdale seemed to feel under the honours of the Peerage; and when her father assured her that he

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promised to be a great accession to the ministerial phalanx, although he had not then taken any prominent part in debate, she observed, that they were all under the greatest obligations to Mr Wylie.

"Yes," replied the old Peer; "in him the Minister tells me I have drawn a capital prize; for his shrewdness in committees is worth all the noisy talents of the debaters."

"I should not be surprised were the Minister to detach him from your Lordship and make him his own," said the Countess.

"That is not likely," answered the Marquis of Avonside; "for he knows, that by being my member, Mr Wylie is as effectually his own as if he were returned on a pure Treasury interest."

"I cannot even affect to controvert your Lordship's opinion on such subjects," said the Countess; "but it occurs to me that the ministers, if they set so high a value on him, will naturally be desirous to attach him exclusively to themselves; and I should not be surprised were they to charm him into their circle by the offer of a baronetcy."

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"I do not suppose," replied the Marquis, thoughtfully, "that Wylie can already expect to be raised so soon to that rank."

"It is impossible," rejoined the Countess, "to say what are the expectations of ambitious men; and when we reflect on the history of Wylie, it is not to be disputed that he is ambitious, from whatever cause the passion may have sprung."

"You surprise me, Augusta," said her father; "it would be a most ungrateful thing were Wylie to throw the weight of his great talents into any other scale. He surely cannot forget what I have done for him."

"True," replied the Countess; "I do not think he will forget that; but then he may place opposite to your favours—observe, however, my Lord, that I do not myself think so—he may place opposite to them the obligations he conferred in bringing about my re-union with Sandyford, and especially in the address by which he made a proselyte of my brother Riversdale. Perhaps, therefore, it might be as well—probably your Lordship has already formed some plan on the subject—to

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raise him at once above the effects of ministerial influence, by procuring him a baronetcy."

"Certainly, Lady Sandyford, I did think some time or another of using my influence for that purpose, but not exactly in the course of the first session of his parliamentary career. But considering the sensation he has produced in the highest quarter, I do not think it would be a bad stroke of policy were I at once to rivet him to me for ever, by obtaining for him a baronetcy."

"It would," replied the Countess, "induce the world, and particularly political men, to wonder more and more at the great efficacy of your Lordship's predominant influence. Besides, I should like, above all things, to have it in my power to address Mr Wylie by the title of Sir Andrew; for you are aware, my Lord, that although yourself and Sandyford have most honourably rewarded his heartfelt friendship to us, that as yet I have had no means of shewing him any gratitude; and, therefore, were it at all consistent with your Lordship's public views to procure a baronetcy for him, I would ask it as a favour to myself."

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"Really, Augusta, you are so very considerate, that I should almost be tempted to gratify you in this, even were the policy of my family in some degree opposed to it. But seeing the likelihood of the ministers trying to enlist our little friend entirely to themselves, I cannot serve my public and private interests better than by taking measures to obtain for Wylie the rank to which you allude."

The same day the Marquis sent for Sir Charles Runnington on the subject, and instructed him to proceed in the proper manner to obtain the consent in the proper quarter to a baronetcy for our hero.

Sir Charles, as we have long ago stated, was a diplomatic character in the interest of the Marquis; and in the most strict sequence to his instructions, he proceeded, step by step, to agitate the question, and to solicit the honour. In this business he had occasion to ask an audience of the Premier; and on stating the object of his visit, that great man said at once, promptly, "Is it possible, Sir Charles, that Mr Wylie himself can desire such a thing?"

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"It will doubtless be gratifying him to receive the honour," replied Sir Charles, with a simper, meant to be expressive.

"Very well, he shall have it," exclaimed the Minister; "but I thought a man of his sense would never have aspired to any empty title; but, nevertheless, he shall have it. I always feel a particular gratification in obliging my noble friend the Marquis of Avonside; indeed his Lordship's claims on government are of the first class, and it is not so much my desire, as it is my duty, to satisfy all his reasonable wishes."

Sir Charles was delighted with the success of this his only successful mission; and the Marquis felt singularly obliged that the request was conceded, not only on account of his own public services, but in so handsome a manner, that the Minister had never once inquired whether his protegée was in possession of an adequate estate to uphold the dignity of the honour. Thus, to the surprise of our hero, and of all his friends but those in the secret, he was, on the following Saturday night, gazetted a Baronet, by the style and title of Sir

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Andrew Wylie, Baronet, of Wylie, which, for the benefit of our English readers, we should add, is, in the good legal language of the North, Sir Andrew Wylie, Baronet, of that Ilk, or of the same.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE RETURN.

When the necessary preliminaries were arranged for the journey to Scotland, the Earl and Countess, with Sir Andrew, set off in the same carriage. It was the intention of Lord and Lady Sandyford to visit Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret Maybole at their seat of Auchinward, in Ayrshire, ostensibly in fulfilment of a promise which the Countess had long made to her Ladyship, who had been one of her mother's most particular and esteemed friends; but really, as the Earl said, to make from that strong-hold of generous feelings and affections, reprisals on the pride and prejudices of the Craiglands.

We shall not trouble our readers with any account of their journey, which was performed with

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all convenient expedition till the travellers reached Kilmarnock, where they separated—the Earl and Countess proceeding to Auchinward. Sir Andrew lingered some time at the inn, in order to throw his arrival at Stoneyholm late in the evening, and partly to inspect the re-edification of the town, which had been accomplished during his absence from Scotland; and as he walked from Brian's Inn to the Cross, he felt something like sorrow to see that the place which the stands of the sweetie-wives used to adorn on the Fair days, when he visited the town in company with Charles Pierston, was obliterated: a spacious and handsome street rendered it difficult to recognize the old houses which still remained in the neighbourhood. The improvements appeared to him like the changes produced by time and climate on the face of an early friend, when seen after an interval of many years; and although they bore testimony to the prosperity of his native land, they were yet, to his feelings, but as tombstones erected over the remains of ancient simplicity, and the venerable manners of the olden time.

Having returned to the inn, he ordered a chaise for Kilwinning, as he intended to walk from thence

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to Stoneyholm. Why he should not at once have proceeded to his grandmother's, would require more metaphysics to explain than the reader who stands in need of an explanation could comprehend. Possibly it may have originated in some wish to contemplate at leisure the scenes of his youth, or to enjoy the balmy freshness of the summer evening, or in some token of humility or silent expression of thankfulness for the happy circumstances in which he had been permitted to return; or perhaps, from a sentiment of affection towards less fortunate friends, he was averse to obtrude upon their view any indication of the prosperity which had crowned his adventures. Be this, however, as it may, he proceeded to Kilwinning.

It was a beautiful evening; the sun set in all his glory beyond the hills of Arran; and the peak and summits of Goatfield, covered with a fine aerial haze, gleamed, as it were, with an internal principle of splendour. The sea in the Bay of Ayr lay like molten gold, and Ailsa rose empurpled in the distance like a magnificent amethyst; while the whole coast, from the towers of Culzean to the promontory of Ardrossan, glittered with towns and

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villages, and the seats of many, who, like our hero, had returned home to enjoy the fruits of their prosperous adventures.

Every thing in the spacious view was calculated to calm the mind and expand the feelings. The summer was clothed in her richest verdure of luxuriant fields and leafy boughs; the streamlets flowed in clearer currents; and the colours of the broom and the daisy were unwontedly bright; the birds in the hedge-rows seemed rather to hold a gentle and harmonious interchange of occasional notes, than to indulge in their own peculiar songs; even the crows, as they made way to the rocky woods, hovered in their flight, as if they partook of the general composure of all nature; and the angler, returning home, lingered in his path, and frequently paused to admire the flakes of fleecy gold that floated over the setting sun.

There are but two situations in which the adventurer, returning home, can duly appreciate the delightful influences of such an hour of holiness, and beauty, and rest. The one, when he is retreating from an unsuccessful contest with fortune —when baffled and mortified by the effects either

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of his integrity or of his friendlessness, he abandons the struggle, and retires to his native shades as to the embraces of a parent, to be lulled by the sounds that were dear to his childhood, and which he fondly hopes will appease his sorrows, and sooth him asleep forever;—the other, when, like our hero, conscious of having achieved the object of his endeavours, he comes with an honest pride to enjoy that superiority over his early companions, which, after all the glosses that may be put upon the feeling, is really the only reward of an adventurous spirit. Both prompt to the same conduct; but the maimed, and the luckless, and the humiliated, shrink from the view, shivering with grief as they remember the thick and blushing promises of their spring, and contrast them with the sear and yellow leaf of their withered and fruitless autumn.

By the time Sir Andrew reached Kilwinning, the village fires and the stars were shining out; and the full moon, which had risen over the shadowy masses of the woods of Eglinton, tinted the leaves of the hedges, and the ripplings of the Garnock water with a flickering and silvery light.

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Our hero, as he walked to Stonepholm, recognised every step of the road which he had so often travelled; but it seemed to him that all things, as he approached the hamlet, had become smaller and meaner; the trees appeared stunted, the hedges more rude and irregular, and the distance between each well-known object greatly abridged.

He passed several cottages, with the inhabitants of which he had formerly been intimate, but a strange restraint prevented him from entering any of them. The turnpike house had been one of his favourite haunts, and he had made up his mind to go in; but before tapping at the door, he glanced in at the window, and saw, assembled round the fire, a numerous family, comprehending a member from all the seven ages of man, but not one face of an old acquaintance.

The trust of the gate was now in the hands of strangers, and this mutation made him feel a disappointment, gentle of its kind, but melancholy; and he went forward in the dark shadow of the hedges, pondering on a thousand little incidents that had long slept in his remembrance, but which

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the sight of old and endeared objects in the shroudy paleness of the moonlight, recalled as with the sadness and solemnity of church-yard recollections.

At a turn of the road, where the hedge on the one side terminated, and the river was seen open and glittering, as it murmured in its shallow and pebbly channel, he obtained the first view of Stoneyholm, beyond which the groves of the Craig-lands lay dark and massive; several lights shewed where the mansion-house stood; and the tall white chimnies above the trees, appeared to him like the sails of a vessel that lay sunk in deep and silent waters.

But the grave and pensive mood in which he thus approached his early home, he was soon sensible ought not to be indulged; and making an effort to quicken his step and lighten his spirit, he walked briskly to the door of his grandmother's cottage. His intention was to enter suddenly, to enjoy the exclamations of her joyous surprise; but in passing the window towards the door, he heard some one within speaking, and paused irresolute; he listened, and thought that the accents of the voice were familiar: they recalled to his mind,

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with the distinctness of more than painting, all the most remarkable passages of his boyish years;—the amusements he had enjoyed with companions, dead, or scattered, or chained by fortune to rustic drudgery; even the image of poor Maggy, the magpie, came up in the visions of that dream of fond remembrance; and trains of feelings and associations were awakened, that filled his eyes with tears; for the voice was that of the worthy Tannyhill, then sitting with his grandmother, penning a letter to himself, in which she earnestly entreated, now that he was become a great and grand man, to let her see him before she died. With a merry hand, and a beating heart, he tirled at the pin; and as the schoolmaster admitted him, he went forward into the light before old Martha was aware. But we leave the reader to imagine what ensued, while we refrain, in reverence, from presuming to describe the joy and the piety of that hallowed scene.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHURCH.

The next day being Sunday, Sir Andrew took an early walk in his former favourite haunts, among the woods of the Craiglands, and returned to his grandmother's cottage without having met any of his early friends. While they were at breakfast, which consisted of the same homely fare that he had been accustomed to in his youth, the master called for the purpose of inviting him to walk to church with him. That modest and gentle being still seemed to regard him as the same curious boy that he had so long before known him; nor was there any thing in the demeanour of our hero, during the interview of the preceding evening, to make him suspect that riches and he-

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nours had in aught changed the simplicity of his original character.

Sir Andrew, however, declined the invitation. "I canna gae wi' you the day, Master," said he, "for grannie will expect me to cleek wi' her, and aiblins to carry her big Testament, as of old, tied in a napkin, under my oxter."

There was a little waggery in the manner in which this was expressed, but of so moderate a kind, that it might have passed for sincerity. He had, indeed, resolved in his own mind to resume his former familiarity, as well as the broad accent of his boyish dialect; not that the latter required any effort, for he had carefully and constantly preserved it, but he had unconsciously adopted a few terms and phrases purely English; and in the necessity of speaking intelligibly to his clients and fashionable friends, had habitually acquired, without any of the Southern tone, considerable purity of language. The characteristic answer of his grandmother, however, set the matter at rest.

"No," replied Martha, "though I'll hae great pride and pleasure in seeing you, Andrew, wath-

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ing at my side to the house of Him that has preserved you in the hollow of his hand, and in the skirts of his garment, as the shepherd tenderly does the helpless lamb. I maunna forget that ye're noo a man whom the King delighted to honour, and that it's baith my part as a liege, and a christian, no to require ony thing at your hands that would mislikken the favour of Providence wherewith you have been blessed, and raised into the light that shines on high places."

Sir Andrew looked at the worthy master, whose eyes were suffused with delight at this expression of a pious and venerable humility; and in the same moment, he rose from his seat, and walked to the door, to conceal the responsive sympathy of his own emotion.

As it was soon known in the village, that our hero had come to visit his grandmother, before the bell began to ring many of the inhabitants were assembled in the churchyard, and when he was seen coming along the path, with Martha on his right, and the master on his left, a buzz, and pressing forward among the spectators,

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shewed the interest his arrival had excited. The old people observed, with a lively sentiment of kindness towards him, that he was dressed much in the same style as when he left them; but they became diffident and bashful as he approached, and some of the farmer lads, who had been at school with him, respectfully took off their hats. The innocent Tannyhill smiled as he looked around, and felt as if he was participating in the honours of a triumph. But Sir Andrew himself appeared more sedately cheerful, and shook hands heartily with all his old acquaintance, and to those who possessed any peculiarity of humour, he said something blithe and appropriate, which shewed how perfectly he remembered them all. Among others, he recognized old Thomas Steek, the tailor, leaning on his crutch, and said to him, "Ye see the Lononers haena been able to put me in a better fashion than you and clipping Jock did."

On reaching the church door, where Mr Covenant, the elder, a tall, pale, grey-haired man, with a cocked hat, a white three-tier wig, and a blue

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cloak, was standing at the brod, he paused for a moment, and allowed the master and his grandmother to pass on before him. The crowd, especially the school-boys, had followed close at his heels, in the expectation of seeing him deposit some liberal donation to the poor. They reckoned on nothing less than a handful of gold, and it at first appeared that he had some intention of realising their expectation; but he checked himself, and instead of throwing any thing into the plate, gave the elder a slip of paper, to be sent up to the precentor, and simply said to him, "Mr Covenant, I'm no just so weel prepared at this moment to do what I ought, so ye'll come to me the morn's morning betimes, when I can better testify my thankfulness for being restored in safety among you;" and in saying these words, he walked thoughtfully to the pew where his grandmother sat, and took his old place at her side.

The church was unusually crowded, and all eyes, till the minister entered the pulpit, were turned towards him, as he sat looking on the reading-board, and tracing his still unobliterated initials, and the outlines of birds and houses,

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which, in the languor of Mr Doindeal's discourses, he had formerly inscribed with a pin, to the great displeasure of his grandmother.

When Mr Symington, who had succeeded Dr Doindeal in the ministry, after the Doctor's call to the better stipend of Bunnockhive, rose to give out the Psalm, Sir Andrew, startled by the sound of the new voice, was roused from his reverie, and felt for a moment as if all the incidents of his life, from the time he had last sat in the church, were the impalpable fancies of one of his youthful dreams; and this feeling, when the venerable divine read out the two first lines of the thirtieth Psalm,

> "Lord, I will thee extol, for thou
> Hast lifted me on high,"

one of those which he had repeated to Mary Cunningham, made him involuntarily turn his eye up towards the Laird's left, where it again met for a moment the same bright and smiling orb that he had so often seen sparkling in the same sphere.

Mr Symington possessed more of the pastoral virtues of his office than his predecessor, but he

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was neither an eloquent nor an interesting preacher, nor was his subject calculated that day to attract the attention of our hero: so that, after the opening of the sermon, Sir Andrew began to look around him, and to discover, with a mingled sentiment of pleasure and sorrow, many faces that he distinctly recollected; all of them, however, had suffered from the withering breath of Time. There were one or two young girls, that still seemed as fresh and blooming as ever; but upon a sharper inspection, he saw they were strangers to him, and in the altered looks of the matrons who sat beside them, he recognized the mothers for whom he had at first mistaken the daughters.

A cold and penetrating sentiment of grief quivered through his bosom, when in several instances he with difficulty made out in countenances, depressed, it might almost be said depraved, with premature age, the effects of heavy toil and constant labour, the faces of old school-fellows whom he recollected among the boldest and the liliest of all his young companions. But this painful feeling received some alleviation, in seeing that the elder

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worthies of the clachan still seemed to retain their former respectability; and that, upon the whole, there was a visible improvement in the appearance of the congregation in general.

At the conclusion of the sermon, Mr Tannyhill, who held the threefold office of schoolmaster, session-clerk, and precentor, rose and read from one paper the names of those, who, in distress and sickness, desired the prayers of the congregation. He then took up another, which he had folded in his Psalm-book, and with an elevated and cheerful countenance, as if exulting in the task he was required to perform, said aloud, with an emphatic and triumphant accent, "And Andrew Wylie returns thanks for his safe return."

The instant these words were pronounced, a universal rustle in the church, followed by a low and kindly whisper, shewed the impression which their simplicity made on the congregation; and it was observed that the Laird, after looking down at Sir Andrew for about a minute, turned to his sister, and said something which appeared to give her pleasure; what Mary Cunningham felt

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on the occasion was not easily guessed; for she dropped her handkerchief, and stooped to lift it, and when she again stood up, she was so engaged in putting it into her pocket, which she did not exactly find so readily as she appeared to wish, that nobody could see her face.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHURCH-YARD.

When the congregation was dismissed, Sir Andrew left his grandmother, telling her, that, as he wished to speak to some of his old acquaintance, he would follow her home. Accordingly, hastening out into the church-yard, he took his station exactly on the spot where he was wont to exchange the smile of youthful recognizance with Mary Cunningham; and while he was joyfully greeted and welcomed home by every one, whom, in going to church, he had not an opportunity of speaking to, his eye was restlessly turned towards the door from which in due time the Laird, Miss Misy, and Mary, made their appearance.

Time had now laid so many years on the shoulders of the Laird, that he stooped and tottered beneath the load. He no longer wore his hand

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in his pockets; but with one arm leant on his daughter's, while he supported himself by the other with a tall gold-headed cane, from which dangled a leathern-string and tassel considerably above his grasp. Miss Mizy had also some difficulty in moving under the weight of age. Her lean and scraggy figure seemed considerably more awry than formerly; her steps were much shorter and quicker, though she made less way; and her head nodded with a loose and unsettled oscillation, which, even in the energy of scolding the maids, could not be described as emphatic. But Mary Cunningham, though long fully developed into an elegant woman, was still in the pride of beauty. The liveliness of her air was, however, mellowed into a serene and gracious benignity, and it was a Sabbathly theme of regret and wonder to the parishioners, that such an heiress should remain so long single.

The moment that Sir Andrew saw "the family" coming, he went towards them with a slight feeling of trepidation. The Laird shook him cordially by the hand; Miss Mizy also welcomed him with uncommon briskness; and Miss Cun-

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ningham herself looked so pleased, that it was observed by some of the shrewd observers around them, that "mair strange things had come to pass than that Andrew Wylie should be married to Craigland's dochter," an event, in their opinion, which would be a far greater promotion than his seat in Parliament, or the honour of his baronetcy.

Sir Andrew walked with the family down the church-yard, towards a stile which led into the highway, considerably nearer "The Place" than the gate that opened into the village. In going along a foot-path that winded among the graves, they happened to pass by the tomb-stone where he had so faithfully been attended in his task by Mary, and with an instinctive glance, he observed that she threw her eye on it, and that a slight cast of thoughtfulness at the moment overshadowed her countenance.

"It's something the waur of the wear since yon time," said he softly to her, and her face in an instant was covered with blushes.

But, with considerable spirit and gaiety, she retorted, "And I doubt you have forgotten some of your fifty Psalms."

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Nothing more passed at that time, for the Laird interposing said to him, "I hope, Sir Andrew, ye'll no objek to tak your kail wi' us; but my sister wasna fond to bid you, 'cause we hae only a head and pluck, and a cauld hen; but I ken that ane of Snoozle the China sow's wee grumphies was killed yesteen, and gin ye'll promise to intermit with us, just in the way of pot-luck, we'll get it roasted by the time that divine service is o'er in the afternoon. What say ye? I hope and wish ye would come; for it's a great pleasance to me to see and hear of a lad from our ain gait-end, that has done so weel, as they say ye hae; so I expect ye'll no be blate, but just use your freedom, and tak a bit neighbourly chack o' dinner."

Our hero was delighted with the invitation, and getting at once into the old man's humour, said, with a drolling accent, and a significant nod both to Mary and her aunt, "If it's no a sin, Laird, to dine out on the Sabbath-day, I'm sure I'll be right blithe to dine wi' you at the Craiglands; but I maun first tell grannie, for fear she should be angry."

"That's a' very right, my man," replied the

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Laird, in something like an affectionate manner; "for she did mickle for you; but I understand ye hae been a kind and dutiful bairn. Howsomever, I hope ye'll come to us."

"I think, brother," said Miss Misy, "that ye might as well bid old Martha likewise; for ye ken she's now a woman of some degree, Sir Andrew being a Baronet, forbye a Member of Parliament."

"That's very true, Misy; and she's a decent creature, though a wee overly pridefu'," replied the Laird; "so I hope, Sir Andrew, ye'll bring your grannie wi' you. We'll be very content to see her; for I understand Mary Cunningham, my daughter, has a great opinion of her prudence and judgment; and ye ken she got no sma' insight o' character at Mrs Prejink's boarding-school in Edinburgh, where she was to the outside of three years, whereby she cost me mair ilk year than Doctor Donaldson had for his stipend before the augmentation."

Miss Cunningham, not much relishing this dissertation of her father, pressed his arm to induce the old gentleman to desist; but this only made

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things worse, for he said, "Na, na, Mary, ye needna chirt my arm, for ye ken weel it's true: and yet far a' that, Sir Andrew, ye see she hasna gotten a man, although she's a hantle mair weel far't, and will hae ten times the tocher o' her mither."

"Ay, but, Laird," replied our hero pawkily, "young leddies in her mother's time, I'm thinking, werena sae nice as they're noo-a-days."

"Ah! ye ken naething about it—ye ne'er was farther aff your eggs in thinking sae," replied the Laird; "for I can assure you, Sir Andrew, that her mother was just a sorrow to court; for although she was the seventh dochter of poor Beuvesland, there never was sic a flyting heard in a house, as there was before she would consent to tak me; although her father, as ye aiblins hae heard, was drownt wi' debt by the Ayr bank, and though the downseat of the Craiglands was an almous deed to the best tocher'd lass at the time, either in Carrick, Cail, or Cunningham."

In this sort of "daunering conversation," as our hero called it, they reached the stile, where he assisted the two ladies and the Laird over, and

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was surprised to find a handsome carriage waiting to receive them. But though the equipage was in a tasteful modern style, the horses and the coachman were in the old slovenliness of the Craighands. The horses were unmatched, the one being black, and the other bay, and they appeared as rough and shaggy, as if they had been taken from the grass that morning, and harnessed without being groomed, which was probably the fact. Old Robin Taigle, the Laird's man, performed as many offices as Scrub in the play; and was riding postillion without boots, in coarse grey worsted stockings, with a straw-rope round his offside leg, to protect it from being chafed by the pole,—indubitable proofs that it was extremely probable he had not time, or "couldna be fashed" that morning to attend either to himself or the horses.

Having handed the ladies, and also assisted the Laird, into the carriage, Andrew retired, and Robin, with a loud cry of "jee, brutes!" set off at a sober rate towards "The Place;" while Miss Misy, putting her head out at the carriage-window, said, "Mind noo, Sir Andrew, that we'll

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expect to see both you and your grandmother, and ye'll tak a hearty welcome for good cheer."

Our hero, as this stately equipage drove away, stood two or three minutes looking after it, and thought, for the first time in his life, that it was no longer a foolish thing to even himself with Mary Cunningham.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

DAFT JAMIE.

"Isna that a dreadfu' fine coach?" said a voice behind Sir Andrew, as he still continued looking after the carriage. "I'se warrant ye ne'er saw the like o't in Lonon—though the King's there."

Our hero was a little startled by this salutation, and turning round, beheld daft Jamie standing on the steps of the stile, dressed in an old cavalry jacket. On his head was the crown of a hat, cut into something like a soldier's cap; his neck and legs were bare, and his whole appearance betokened the military vanity of harmless idiotcy.

Jamie was neither of the aborigines of the parish, nor a native of Ayrshire, however celebrated

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that county may be for the production of such worthies. In our hero's time he was not known at Stoneyholm, where, indeed, he was only an occasional visitor, in consequence of making it one of his resting-places, in his professional journeys to the periodical reviews of the garrisons of Glasgow and Ayr. His favourite haunt was Greenock, and for the best of all possible reasons, because, as he said, "the folk there were just like himsel."

It was his custom, however, when he happened to be at Stoneyholm on Sunday, to follow "the family" from the church to the stile, and to assist the Laird into the carriage, for which he was usually rewarded by the ladies with a penny. But on this occasion, as they were squired by Sir Andrew, to whom the attention of the crowd was so particularly directed, and whom he heard spoken of as having come from London with "a power of money," Jamie diffidently kept aloof till the carriage drove off, when seeing our hero following it with his eye, he naturally imagined that it was in admiration of its splendour.

Sir Andrew, as we have observed, was a little

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startled at Jamie's salutation; but perceiving what sort of personage he had to deal with, he replied, "Ay, it's a braw coach."

Jamie, encouraged by the familiarity of this answer, came down from the stile, and looking queerly in his face, said, "The leddies didna gie you ony bawbees, but ye're to get your dinner. They baith gie me baubees and my dinner."

"That's because ye're a captain, ye ken," replied the Baronet.

"I'm thinking," said Jamie, echoing the opinions he had heard in the churchyard, "that ye should make up to ane o' the leddies. I hae had a thought o't, man, mair than ance mysel; but I'm no sure whilk to tak."

"Is that possible?" exclaimed Sir Andrew.

"'Deed is't," said Jamie; "for though Miss Mary's the bonniest, Miss Mizy keeps the keys, and I'm desperate keen of flesh and tarts. But I'll tell you something; if ye'll speak a gude word for me, I'll do as muckle for you; for I would like unco weel to hurl in that braw coach, and walk my body wi' a golden-headed cane like the Laird."

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"A bargain be't," said Sir Andrew, laughing; "I'll no fail to do my best for you with Miss Mizy."

"And what for no wi' Miss Mary?" said Jamie, looking at him peeringly; and then he cried, "O ho, my hearty, is that the way the land dies already. Howsomever, there's my hand, through foul or fair—eyes right, and look to your officer."

There was something in this little scene which made our hero feel dissatisfied with himself. He had not given the idiot credit for half the discernment he possessed, and to be quit of him took out a sixpence, and giving it hastily to Jamie, turned and walked away.

As Sir Andrew ascended the steps of the stile, and went home to his grandmother's cottage through the churchyard, Jamie ran leaping and exulting, holding the sixpence aloft between his finger and thumb, straight on to The Place, where he arrived just as the carriage was driving off after setting down the family.

"What's making you so glad the day, Jamie,"

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said Mary to him, who was still standing at the door.

"Do you see what I hae got?" was the reply, shewing the sixpence; and adding, "noo, I'll hae ay or no frae Miss Mizy—and if she'll no tak me, then I'll tak you. But na; I canna do that noo, honour, honour—that puts an end, Miss Mary, to a' your hopes o' me."

"Ye're certainly, I see," said Miss Cunningham, laughingly, "a rich match indeed; but who gave you the sixpence?"

"The wee man wi' the muckle purse; but I'm no at liberty to say ony mair, so spear nae questions, and I'll tell nae lies!" replied Jamie. "But, Miss Mary, he's a fine bit body yon—I wonder ye canna tak a fancy till't—eh, Miss Mary, he's just like a bonny wee china pourie, full o' thick ream. Ye would lick your lips an ye kent what I ken—I redd ye, Miss Mary, to mak muckle o' him, or I wouldna be surprised an he fuff'd awa' wi' a' his goud and gear to Miss Jenny Templeton o' the Braehead, that's got the tocher frae Indy. Oh, she's a sonsy, rosy cheekit lass! I

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would like to hae a sheep's head wi' as gude a cuff o' the neck. He'll get a bien bargain that gets Miss Jenny."

Miss Cunningham, amazed and surprised at this speech, said, "But, Jamie, what makes you think the wee man wi' the muckle purse is likely to prefer me first to Miss Jenny Templeton."

"That's a question amang divines, Miss Mary," replied Jamie. "But if I were in your place, when he's getting his dinner wi' you the day, I would gie him the tappy-tourock o' the pye, and the best leg o' the fat hen; and wha kens what may be the upshot."

"But, Jamie," said Miss Cunningham, "this is not leap-year. The ladies are not free to court but in leap-years."

"That may be the rule, Miss Mary, in ordinary times. But men's growing scarce—the regiment that's noo at Ayr, is under orders for America; they'll tak a whole thousand awa' themselves—and gin the war continues lang, ye'll hardly get a lad in time for love or money, so I wadna be overly particular about leap-years; especially when sic a Godsend has come to your doors, as yon nice

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couthy Lenon bodie; they say he has a purse o' gold as big as a bolk o' potatoes."

"Come in, Mary Cunningham," cried Miss Mizy from the parlour, "and dinna stand clishmaclavering with that haverel there on the Sabbath-day."

"I'm thinking, Miss Mizy, ye'll hae to mend your manners," retorted Jamie; "I may be a haverel, but every body kens what ye're."

"Come ben, and close the door immediently," said the maiden lady, still more sharply; at which words Jamie rushed past Miss Cunningham, and looking into the parlour where Miss Mizy was sitting with the Laird, said, "I hae a saxpence under my thumb, and I'll get credit in ilka town; so, Miss Mizy, ye may look to yourel. The poor man gets aye a poor marriage, and when I had naething I was fain to draw up wi' you. But the world's changed noo—I'm for a lass wi' a lump o' land, and a young ane too, Miss Mizy. Howsomever, no to mak a rent and a rive o't a'thegither between us, gin ye hae the shachle bane o' a mutmon ham, I'll find a corner near my heart for a' the flesh on't along wi' your kindness, Miss Mizy,

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—for I'm growing yawp, and hunger, though it's gude kitchen to a cauld potato, is a wet divot to the low o' love."

"Weel, weel, Jamie, gang butt the house, and see what the lasses hae got in the pantry," said Miss Mizy; while the Laird, with whom Jamie was a favourite, gave one of these sudden great roaring laughs, which are so well known by the generic term of a guffaw, observing, when he stopped, which he did almost as abruptly as he began, "Really, he's a ready-witted fool that."

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAIRD'S DRAWING-ROOM.

When Sir Andrew returned to his grandmother's cottage, and informed her how he had been pressed, both by the Laird himself and Miss Mizy, to bring her with him to dinner, she said, "It's a great honour and testification, my lad, that ye should be invited to dine at The Place; and no you only, but even me. I never thought to see the like o' that; but ye maunna be overly lifted up wi't."

"But will ye come wi' me? What say ye to that, granny?"

"'Deed no, my bairn," was the judicious and humble reply; "I'm no used to the ceremonials at the banquettings o' the great, and I'm ower auld now to learn; but I'm blithe and thankful to see

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sae great a respect paid to you; for wha that has seen the eydent hand and unwearied foot wi' which I have so long ca'd at my wheel, no to be a cess, would ever hae thought that I would be requeeshted to tak my dinner in the Craigland dining-room wi' the family."

Our hero felt his heart glow with veneration at the motives by which his grandmother was actuated, and he sat for some time in silence; at last he said, "I'm nae doobt vera meikle obligated to the Laird for his civeelity; but—and I dinna say it out of ostentation and vanity—I may take my place with him at the same board onywhere, and no be thought an intruder; and, therefore, if it wasna putting you to an excess o' trouble, I wish ye would go with me to The Place."

"If it's to pleasure you, Andrew, as it's your welcome home, I'll no make an obstacle wi' my ain objections; but ye ken the Laird himself, poor silly carl, has an unco rouse o' his family; and Miss Misy, though she's vera discreet in some things, looks down on a' poor folk, and was ne'er overly well pleased when Miss Mary visited me with her hamely familiarity. Howsever, I'll gang wi'

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ye, but I would amaist take it a kindness if ye didna insist."

Our hero, however, had a motive in pressing her acceptance of the invitation; for retaining a distinct recollection of the peculiarities both of the Laird and Miss Mizy, he was desirous to see how far they had infected Mary with their prejudices; being determined to make her behaviour towards his venerable parent in some measure a test of her character, in order to govern himself in the indulgence of that regard, which, although at no period so strong as to merit the epithet of passion, was undoubtedly warmer, while it was as constant as fraternal affection.

Accordingly, at the close of the afternoon service, his grandmother, on his reiterated request, walked with him to the mansion-house. On approaching the well-known entrance to the avenue which opened from the high road, he was struck with the air of renovation which every object had been made to assume. The square pillars were not only rebuilt, but the two stone globes which had lain for many years on the ground were replaced on their summits. The iron gates, which

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had not been painted for years before his young remembrance,—and one of which had long fallen from its hinges, and been drawn aside from its proper station,—shone in the fairest white, and swung harmoniously in their proper places. The avenue itself had also undergone a prodigious improvement; it was considerably smoother and better defined along the margin than the king's highway, which was not the case before his departure for London; and the mansion itself had not only received a dazzling white-washing, but the sashes of several of the windows were renewed. Instead, however, of three small windows on each side of the door, as formerly, there was now but one, in the Venetian taste—a contrivance suggested by Miss Mary to evade the window-tax, when the ever-memorable triple assessment was proposed. The Place had indeed received very extensive, and even some radical reformations, and not only bore testimony to the improved spirit of the age, but indicated something of the taste which Mary had acquired during her residence in Edinburgh, and of the influence which she possessed over her father. But it seemed, to the enlarged sight of our

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hero, to have shrunk prodigiously from its former grandeur, although it was certainly, for Scotland, still a respectable country seat.

Sir Andrew and his grandmother, on arriving at the door, were shewn into the drawing-room by Robin Taigle, now acting in the capacity of footman, having put up his horses. Miss Misy thought there was no need to be so ceremonious, and the Laird himself said it was a work of supererogation; but Mary over-ruled their objections, by reminding her aunt of the free footing in which they had found our hero among the great in London. Accordingly, the drawing-room window-shutters, which had not been opened for at least a fortnight before, were unclosed; and, as we have said, the guests shewn into it by the Laird's man.

The drawing-room of the Craiglands, though without question the most splendid apartment in the whole parish of Stoneyholm, and in the opinion of old Martha, "just a palace," could really boast of no very remarkable ornaments, either of decoration or of art. It contained a large unwieldy settee, of coeval antiquity with the first introduction of that species of recumbency into

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the west of Scotland, being one of the relics of the furniture which the Laird's great-grandfather procured for The Place, when he changed the ancient castle into a mansion; it had originally been covered with needle-work, the skilful endeavour of the then Lady Craiglands and her five daughters to imitate flowers and peacocks, in which they succeeded almost as well, both in effect and design, as the Greenock sculptor, who carved the celebrated effigy of Vulcan in the Vennel of that classical town. But Minerva, envious of their success, having, in the shape of many shoulders, worn several holes in the work, the sofa was at this period covered with simple white dimity, as were also the cushions of the chairs.

The walls of the room were stained with green, the most extravagant of all colours, as Miss Mizy told the visitors who admired it; and over the chimney hung a map of Europe, worked on white satin by Mary, at Mrs Prejink's boarding-school in Edinburgh, which her father assured his friends, was most curiously particular, though France happened to be omitted, either in consequence of the governess believing that Mr Burke declared

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a fact when he said, "France was struck out of the map," or because in drawing the outline she had omitted to leave room to insert it. On each side of this splendid display of Penelopian industry and geographical knowledge, hung two paintings, which were paid for as likenesses of the Laird and his Lady in the halcyon days of their bridal beauty; but with what propriety was never satisfactorily ascertained; Craiglands himself, however, affirmed, that the mole on his wife's cheek was as natural as life, and the scar on the back of his own hand could not be better represented. Along the wall fronting the window hung twelve ancient coloured mezzotinto engravings, in black frames, representing, with all their appropriate symbols, the twelve months of the year; the glasses of several were cracked, and a starred fracture over the face of the blooming May was ingeniously mended by a piece of putty, which entirely concealed her smiles and her beauty. These also were relics of the grand days of the Craiglands; and the like of them, according to the traditions of the family, were not in all Scotland when they were first brought to it. There was but one other ornament

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on the walls, and that was a looking-glass behind the door, and opposite to the fire-place; it was a French plate of considerable dimensions, set in a frame of small ones with gilded rims, so shaped and arranged as to present some almost hieroglyphical indication of leaves and roses; and underneath this pride and glory of the Craiglands stood a second-hand harpsichord, that had been purchased at Edinburgh for Mary, at the enormous cost, as the Laird often repeated, of ten pounds seven shillings, besides the box, and the expence of bringing it to the Craiglands.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE LANDED INTEREST.

The Laird was alone in the drawing-room when Sir Andrew and his grandmother entered; and upon their appearance, without moving from his chair, said, "Come awa, Martha, and tak a seat. I am very well pleased to see you and your grandson, whom I am happy to hear is a weel-doing lad, and likely to be a great comfort to your auld age."

Sir Andrew felt his blood stir a little at the rude superciliousness of this reception—but the supercilious, however refined, are always rude—and compassionating the Laird's obtuse ignorance and indolence, he soon subdued the heat of the moment, and wisely resolved to make a visit, which

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he apprehended might otherwise tax his humility, a source, if possible, of amusement. Accordingly, he took his seat modestly at some distance from the Laird, whom he slyly drew into conversation, by commending the manifold and visible improvements which had taken place in the country during his absence. With all which Craiglands expressed the most satisfactory acquiescence, till the Baronet, in an unguarded moment, happened, among the topics of his commendation, to advert to the diffusion of opulence by the introduction of the cotton manufactures.

"Ah! Sir Andrew," said that illuminated political economist, "it was a black day when poor Scotland saw the incoming pestilence of the cotton Jennies. The reformers and them were baith cleckit at the same time, and they'll live and thrive, and I hope will be damn'd thegither."

"Wheesht, wheesht, Laird!" exclaimed the old woman; "that's an awfu' word—remember the Sabbath-day."

"Remember the deevil!" cried this worthy member of the landed interest. "Isna what I

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say a God's truth? The vera weavers in Glasgow and Paisley hae houses, I'm told, that the Craiglands here wouldna be a byre to. Can ony gude come, but vice and immorality, from sic upsetting in a Christian kingdom?—What would ye think, Sir Andrew, one o' the trash, Macandoe, a manufacturer, had the impudence to bid against my Lord at the roup of the Frierslaud, and not only outbade his man o' business, but even Major Hyder, the nabob from India."

"That," replied the Baronet, "was indeed vera surprising, Laird; sic a thing wouldna hae happened in the days of my youth, nor in times afore them. But I dinna think the Major o' ony better stock than Mr Macandoe; for his father, ye ken, was the town-drummer of Kilmaining, and he himself, as I hae heard, listed as a common soldier at the outbreaking o' the American war."

"Ye're no far wrang in some particulars," interrupted the Laird; "but he raised himsel by his merits in the service of his king and country, and made his fortune in the wars o' India, which is an unco difference to cotton spinning."

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"Ay, there's some truth in that, Laird," replied our hero. "But what's the story o' this Macandoe?"

"Story! poogh.—He was the get of a Kilwinning weaver," said Craiglands, "and gaed intil Glasgow when the cotton-warks began, where he got credit; but whether by stealing clues, or setting windmill bills ageing, I never heard the rights o'. When he took possession of the Friersland, I was obligated, out o' the respect due to my family, to buy a chaise, for he has got one, and wi' horses and flunkies too, that they say my Lord himsel hasna the like o'. It's enough, Sir Andrew, to gar a bodie scunner to hear o' weavers in coaches, wi' flunkies ahint them. Mary would fain hae had me to cultivate a visitation-acquaintance with him; for, as she said, Mrs Macandoe didna want sense, and one of their dochters was at the Edinburgh school, learning manners wi' her, and was a fine lassie; but I would as soon sit in a Relief kirk, as darken the door o' ony sic cattle."

"Ay, but, Laird," interposed the old woman, "there has been a growth o' many comforts since

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the cotton-warks were brought in. There's Jenny Eydent, when her gudeman brak, and die't o' a broken heart, in the calamity o' the Ayr bank, she was left wi' a sma' family o' seven weans, five dochters, and twa twin-babies o' lad bairns, and no help but her ten fingers. See what she has been enabled to do by the tambouring. There's no a better clad, or a better bred family in a' the kintra side. Miss Janet, her second dochter, a weel-far't lassie, was cried the day, for a purpose o' marriage with John Sailfar, that's noo a captain of a three-mastit ship frae Greenock; and her son Willy, that's so douce and comely in the kirk, to the pleasure of every body that sees him, is gaun intill Glasgow to learn to be a minister; for the cotton-works hae made that, whilk in my day would hae been a sore burden, a stock in trade o' mony hands, whom the Lord has blessed with thriftiness and prosperity."

"Ay, but, grannie, ye ken," said Sir Andrew, pawkily, "what a rise has since been in the price of butter and cheese—that, to be sure, may have gi'en a lift to the rent o' land; but then the day-

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labourer's wage it's doubled, and coats and hats are twa prices."

"Really, Sir Andrew," replied the Laird, rubbing his hands with satisfaction, and giving one of his inordinate guffaws, "I havena heard sic a gospel truth for a long time. But they tell me ye're wonderfu' clever, and surely that observe was a proof and testimony of the same. Come, draw your chair closer to mine; for I'm fash'd wi' a rheumatiese in my arm, and canna thole to converse o'er my shouther."

At this juncture Miss Mizy came into the room, and passing old Martha, took her place in the seat of honour, facing her brother, before she spoke. Our hero, who had begun to gain a little in the Laird's good opinion, was somewhat disconcerted by this rudeness, and drew no favourable augury of the manners of Mary, who had not yet made her appearance. The fact was, that, after their return from church, Miss Cunningham, whether influenced by the exhortation of daft Jamie, or by the manners she had learnt at Edinburgh, induced her aunt, in consideration

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of the rank of their guest, to make some additions to the dinner beyond the pig, which the Laird himself had ordered to be roasted; and in the superintendance and direction of the same, the ladies had in the meantime been employed.

"Sister," said the Laird to Miss Mizy, when she had taken her seat, "I'm vastly weel pleased with this lad's sense and discretion."

"Dear me, brother," replied the lady, eagerly, "ye forget that he's noo a Baronet, and a great Parliament-man;" and turning with a smirk to our hero, she added, "Sir Andrew, ye ken the Laird's jocose way, and ye'll no tak it ill, if he should noo and then neglek your teetle."

"O no, Miss Mizy, the Laird and I are no acquaintance of yesterday, and we can bear muckle wi' ane another for auld lang syne."

"Andrew Wylie," cried his grandmother, "how can ye break the Lord's day by speaking o' songs, and the like o' sic daffing."

At this crisis Mary entered the room, with her complexion somewhat heightened; but whether from any moral or physical cause—whether from

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sentiments connected with seeing our hero an honoured guest in her father's house, or from the reflection of the kitchen-fire, in consequence of her presence being requisite to direct the maids in some of the nicer culinary mysteries, that the occasion had made her desirous to see properly performed, is a question that we shall not attempt to settle. The blush, however, of the moment, lost none of its gracefulness by the manner in which she went to old Martha, and said, "I am glad to see you, and happy that you have come with"—and she hesitated for an instant, and then added, "your grandson."

She afterwards turned to the Baronet, and with a gay but somewhat embarrassed air, said, "Sir Andrew, I fear yon great London folks will have spoiled your relish for our plain country fare?"

"The company," replied Sir Andrew gallantly, "should aye be the best dainties at a' banquets; and the head and pluck, with the sooking gammphy that your father promised, canna fail to

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please, with Miss Mizy's sauce and your garnishing."

There was a little tendency to a pun in this, which Miss Cunningham perceived and perfectly understood; but her aunt took it as a compliment, while the Laird threw himself back in his chair, and roared his delight with one of his heartiest and most ungovernable peals of laughter, declaring when he stopped, that he had not heard sic a funny saying he didna ken when.

When dinner was announced, Sir Andrew stepped forward two or three paces to give Miss Mizy his arm; but suddenly remembering in what lofty company he then was, he retired back, and followed his grandmother, whom the Laird left behind.

Miss Mary probably guessed the object of our hero's alertness and sudden halt; for, instead of going on after her father, as the usual routine of their procession from the drawing-room was on company occasions, at Pace, and Yule, and high times, she abruptly stepped aside, and turning back to the mantle-piece as if to look for some-

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thing, contrived to allow Martha and Sir Andrew to enter the dining-room some time before her. Thus, without giving any cause for observation, delicately performing that homage which is due to invited guests.

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CHAPTER XXI.

BREAKING THE ICE.

In the meantime, Lord and Lady Sandyford, after parting from our hero, had pursued their journey to Auchinward, where they arrived about the same time that he reached Stoneyholm. Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret were delighted to see them; and when informed of the secret object of their visit, and of the motives by which their noble friends were actuated towards Sir Andrew, who was described as the architect of their happiness, they entered with zeal and alacrity into their views. They told them, however, that Miss Cunningham had the reputation of being exceedingly proud and consequential,--the failing, indeed, of the Craiglands family; and that she had already refused some of the best matches in the county.

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"As the figure of Sir Andrew," said Sir Archibald, is not likely to recommend him to a lady's eye, I fear, considering also his low origin, that the undertaking will be more difficult than you imagine. The journey, however, will probably, in other respects, be of advantage to him; for, if he is decidedly refused, or perhaps disgusted, in consequence of the change that may have taken place in his own taste, in so long an absence, he will feel himself free to choose elsewhere."

The Countess replied, "There is much in what you say, Sir Archibald, and were our friend an ordinary man, the justness of your observations would make me despair of the business. But there is so much heart about him—he is all heart—that, I do believe, were he to be rejected by Miss Cunningham, he would soon sink into despondency. From what I have observed of his earnest and persevering character, I am persuaded, that if she was not the sole object of his ambition, her image constituted no inconsiderable portion of the motives by which he has pursued, with so much constancy and consistency, one distinct and clearly defined course of life. Had he been animated

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with the vanity of making a figure in the world, he would certainly have more studied worldly manners, and avarice cannot be considered as even entering into his character, for on all proper occasions he acts with a princely liberality. Nothing but love can account for the care with which, it may be said, he has preserved his original simplicity, and the indifference with which he has seen so many beautiful women, who would have been proud of his hand."

The Earl, who was listening with delighted ears to the warmth of his Lady's eulogium, said, "Why, Augusta, you will make out that Jacob's servitude of fourteen years, and another wife in the meanwhile, was nothing compared with the constancy of our little Baronet."

"Jacob's story," interposed Lady Margaret, somewhat gravely, "is at least a corroboration of her Ladyship's opinion; and I hope that opinion is well founded. But I do not think the case at all so problematical as Sir Archibald seems to think it. Women are not so often ruled in their affections by figure, as they are accused of being; and she added, in a gayer style, "we are domes-

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tic animals, and the fire-side virtues gain more upon us than more showy qualities; especially when we are, like Miss Cunningham, arrived at years of discretion."

"Indeed!" said the Earl, in a lively tone; "and pray, Lady Margaret, when do women arrive at years of discretion?"

"You must ask some one older than she is," replied Sir Archibald, with a laugh.

"Not so," said the Countess, "I can answer for a portion of my sex. A married woman's years of discretion begin when she feels herself dependent on her husband. But to return to the point —Do you visit at the Craiglands family?"

"We call sometimes, and the ladies occasionally come here," was the reply; "but the Laird is such an exception to the world in general, that there is no venturing to ask him to meet strangers."

"How then shall I get introduced to him," said the Earl, "if you do not invite him?"

"O, that can be easily managed," cried Sir Archibald; "if you think fit, we can ride over tomorrow after sermon, and as if incidentally call. Besides, I should like to be introduced to Sir An-

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drew; I should like, indeed, at once to show the Laird in what degree of esteem and respect he is held by his friends. I wish you had brought him with you here; and, of course, on your account, I will at all hazards invite Craiglands."

"We urged Sir Andrew to come all that we could," rejoined Lady Sandyford; "but he was firm and faithful to his own resolution; apprehensive, if he came here, that his grandmother might think he had lost his respect for her."

"You might have given a more romantic colouring to his motive," said the Earl, "and perhaps been quite as near the truth, by saying, that perhaps he wished to take a peep at Miss Cunningham, before she could have any reason to suspect the object of his journey."

"At all events, my Lord, it can do no harm," replied Lady Margaret, "if the Countess and I go with your Lordship and Sir Archibald to-morrow."

"I should like it of all things," said Lady Sandyford; "for I intend to visit his grandmother. It is a tribute of respect due to the genuine worth of one that contributed to form a character of so much probity and feeling as Sir Andrew."

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It was accordingly arranged, that instead of returning home from their parish church after service, on the day following, Sir Archibald and his Lady, with their guests, should drive over before dinner to Stoneyholm; and in the fulfilment of this intention, they reached the Craiglands gate just as the Laird had mumbled grace inwardly to himself, and the party had taken their seats at the dinner table. Few visits, in consequence, as both Miss Mizy and her brother remarked, were ever more ill-timed, for the dinner would be spoiled, as it was not possible to allow visitors of such a degree to wait; another embarrassment arose as to what they should do with their guests, for it was absolutely necessary that the Laird should attend Sir Archibald and the stranger; and no less so, as Miss Mizy observed, that she and Mary should go to the ladies. This dilemma was, however, speedily obviated by Mary, with promptitude and grace, saying firmly, that she would remain at table, while her aunt and father went to the visitors, who, on alighting from their carriage, had been shewn into the drawing-room.

"You gentry, Miss Mary," said old Martha,

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when the Laird and Miss Mizy had left the dining-room, "hae a sore time o't wi' a' this ceremonial, and——"

But she was interrupted by one of the maids looking in at the door, and crying, in a sort of loud under voice of admiration, "Eh! Miss Mary, it's an English Yerl and his Leddy—a delightful creature."

Upon which our hero immediately said, "Lord and Lady Sandyford; they are just now on a visit to Auchinward."

"What ken ye o' lords and leddies, Andrew?" exclaimed the old woman; when Mary immediately replied,

"I suspect much more than he gets credit for among us. But prophets are never respected in their own country; and Sir Andrew is as likely in Stoneyholm to be spoken of by his old title as by his new one;" and turning round to him, she said playfully, "have you forgotten it, Wheelie?"

"No; nor when you last called me by it in the streets of Edinburgh, as I was on my way to London."

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Miss Cunningham blushed; but the look which she cast towards him, was so much in the sprightly manner of their old familiarity, that it told him even Craiglands' daughter then no longer felt that disparity in their condition, which he once thought would never perhaps be overcome.

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CHAPTER XXII.

PRELIMINARIES.

After the reciprocities of the introduction were over, Lord Sandyford, who had previously determined to be all suavity and conciliation, was so tempted by the obvious peculiarities of the Laird and Miss Mizy, that he could not refrain from amusing himself a little at their expence. And accordingly he inquired, with much apparent gravity, if the pictures of Craiglands and his lady, which we have already described, were the portraits of Voltaire and the King of Prussia. The Countess, however, soon checked him, by asking the Laird if he had seen Sir Andrew.

"Atweel we hae seen him; he's noo with his grandmother in the other room. The poor lad, I

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have understood, is weel to do, and we could do nae less than gie him some countenance."

"But what has become of Miss Cunningham?" inquired Lady Margaret. "I should have been happy to have had an opportunity of making her acquainted with Lady Sandyford."

"She's ben the house with the Baronet and his grandmother," replied Miss Mizy.

"Sister," cried the Laird, "gang and tell her to come butt, to see my Leddy."

"Ye ken," said Miss Mizy, winking to her brother, "that she cannot with propriety leave our guests by themselves."

"What for no? Surely we're no to stand on such perknicketties wi' the like o' Martha Docken and her eye."

The Earl and Countess exchanged looks with Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret.

But his Lordship in a moment said, "I beg you will not request Miss Cunningham to leave your friends. Sir Andrew Wylie is a person of such personal worth, that neither Lady Sandyford nor I could possibly allow ourselves to be the cause of any thing towards him that might be con-

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strued into a want of due consideration for his high character and extraordinary talents."

The Laird did not very well understand this, nor what answer to make to the Earl; but he was relieved from his embarrassment by Sir Archibald saying, "It was our intention to have paid our respects to the Baronet, and to invite him to dine at Auchinward to-morrow, where perhaps, Craiglands, you will do us the favour to accompany him."

Lady Margaret at the same time addressed herself to Miss Mizy, and expressed her hope that she was not engaged, and would, with Miss Cunningham, be of the party. Miss Mizy at once accepted the invitation; but the Laird was not altogether pleased to find our hero considered so much on an equality with himself, and seemed reluctant to consent.

"Ye maun excuse me the morn, Sir Archibald," said he, "for it's no vera convenient to me just at this juncture."

The Earl, suspecting the motive of the Laird's hesitation, said adroitly to the Countess, "If Mr Cunningham cannot come, it will be unnecer-

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sary to send the carriage for Sir Andrew, as the ladies will perhaps bring the Baronet with them."

Miss Mizy, who, from the time she had been conciliated by our hero in London, considered him in a favourable light, was not, however, prepared to go such lengths at once as this, and with considerable dexterity replied, addressing Sir Archibald, "My brother will see how he is the morn; and if the weather's good, he'll maybe come with us."

The visitors were at no loss to ascribe this evasion to the proper motive. But Miss Mizy was not allowed to get off so easily; for Lady Margaret said to the Countess, "You had still as well send your coach. It will bring the whole party; and perhaps Miss Mizy, in that case, will have the kindness to make my compliments to the Baronet's grandmother, and say I shall be happy to see her along with them."

The Laird and his sister were equally confounded, and knew not well what answer to make, when the Earl said, "I think, as Sir Andrew and the old lady is in the house, the business should be settled at once."

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"Leddy! Martha Docken a leddy!" thought Craiglands to himself.

"Leddy! Martha Docken a leddy!" thought Miss Mizy also.

But the current, into which their wandering thoughts were running, was stopped by Sir Archibald asking the Earl, if his Lordship could use the freedom with his friend the Baronet to disturb him while at dinner, for otherwise the object of their drive to Stoneyholm would be frustrated. This reminded Lord Sandyford that they had drawn the Laird and Miss Mizy from the table, and with his most gracious and conciliating manner, he expressed his regret to have been the cause of disturbing them. He then turned to Sir Archibald, and with the best look and voice of sincerity that he could assume, he added, "Although my friend, Sir Andrew, is one of the best humoured men living, yet, considering the distinction and deference to which he is accustomed, I should almost hesitate to take so great a liberty. But perhaps this lady," said his Lordship, turning to Miss Mizy, "will take the trouble, merely in an incidental manner, to let him know that Lady Sandy-

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ford is in the house. He will come at once, I know, to see her Ladyship."

It was with some difficulty that the Countess and Lady Margaret could preserve their gravity, at seeing the vacant astonishment with which the Baird and his sister exchanged looks, on hearing Martha Docken's grandson spoken of by an Earl with such consideration.

Miss Mizy, however, without saying a word, rose, and going into the dining-room, told the Baronet, with a degree of diffidence, which even old Martha herself observed, that Lord and Lady Sandyford were in the drawing-room with Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret Maybole, who were desirous of being introduced to him.

Our hero, who was amused by the change in Miss Mizy's deportment, instantly rose and joined the party in the drawing-room, from which he returned in the course of a few minutes, and said to Mary, "Miss Cunningham, you must grant me a favour. The Countess of Sandyford wishes to be introduced to you; allow me to lead you to her Leddyship."

Mary rose instinctively, and Sir Andrew, in

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the moment, forgetting that he had as far as possible resumed his rustic manners, led her away by the hand, to the utter amazement of his grandmother, while Miss Mizy followed, leaving the old woman alone. Her surprise, however, was nothing to that of the Laird, when he saw them enter together; and especially when, after leading Mary to the Countess, the Earl introduced the Baronet to Sir Archibald, as his most particular and esteemed friend, and the person to whom, of all others, he considered himself under the greatest obligations. Lady Margaret was then introduced to him by Sir Archibald, when she expressed her wish that he would bring his grandmother with him to dinner next day.

"That, I fear, will not be in my power," was the reply. "She is an old woman, with very just and discreet notions of her condition, and I would be sorry to put her out of her own way; but of the honour, Leddy Margaret, I am very deeply sensible."

It was then arranged that Lord Sandyford's carriage should be sent over next day to Stoneyholm, for Sir Andrew and the Craiglands family,

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and the visitors soon after retired. The Earl proposed to the Countess, before quitting the house, that they should be introduced to "the old lady;" but Sir Andrew interfered. "Not yet," said he. "It is necessary that I should prepare her in some degree for the honour you intend." And in saying these words, he handed her Ladyship to the carriage.

On returning into the house, he accompanied the Laird and the two ladies back to the dining-room, where Craiglands endeavoured against the grain to rouse himself into some feeling of deference and respect.

Nothing farther of any consequence took place that afternoon. The Baronet tried to entertain the Laird by answering, as circumstantially as possible, his manifold inquiries respecting London, and seemed in some degree to gain upon his good will; but there was a visible restraint on the whole party, and neither seemed to feel quite at ease. Miss Mizy was disconcerted; for the consideration which her noble visitors had shewn towards her guests, she felt as a tacit reproof to her own defi-

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ciency; old Martha was evidently out of her element; and Mary Cunningham was sometimes absent and thoughtful, wondering in her own mind what was to be the issue of all the singular interest which the return of Wheelie seemed to excite.

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CHAPTER XXII.

CRIPPLE JANET.

In the twilight Andrew walked home with his grandmother to her cottage, where he had invited the Master to supper. As they were slowly plodding from the Craiglands-gate to the village, the old woman, reverting to the occurrences of the day, exhorted him no to be lifted up, but to be of a lowly heart, and to walk soberly, and keep a steady hand, that he might be able "to carry the cup which the Lord had filled to overflowing. I never expected to live to see the day when I should sit down with you at Craiglands' table, and be treated on a footing with the family." But the Baronet's mind was intent on other things, and much of her pious admonitions was heard unheeded, and left no trace behind.

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As they approached the door of her humble dwelling, he observed an old woman with a staff in her hand, sitting on the low dry stone wall which connected the cottage with its neighbour. She was in Sabbath cleanness, but her apparel was old and tattered; nevertheless, it presented some of the relics of better days. She wore a small black silk bonnet, embrowned with the sunshine of many summers; her cloak, which had once been scarlet, was changed into a dingy crimson, tattered and patched in several places, and her check apron, neat from the fold, was ragged, and old, and very mean.

When our hero and old Martha drew near, the modest beggar turned aside her face, as if ashamed that Sir Andrew should recognize her, while the place she had chosen shewed that she was there patiently waiting his return home.

"Ye maun gie her saxpence, I'se warrant, Andrew," said Martha, on observing her, "for auld lang syne; poor body, she's noo greatly fail't. In her needcessity she was obligated to sell her wheel; indeed it was nae langer of ony use to her, for she

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had got an income in the right arm, and couldna spin."

"Who is't?" said the Baronet, roused from his reverie by the observations of his grandmother.

"Poor cripple Janet, ye ken. Do ye no mind how you and Charlie Pierston keepit a stand wi' her at Kilwinning Fair? Mony a blithe night you and him had at her fire-side, for she was aye kind to a' the laddies."

Sir Andrew felt a pang of inexpressible sorrow quiver through his heart, at seeing the old woman in a state of beggary; but instead of giving her a sixpence, he went up to her and shook her kindly by the hand. "It's a lang time, Janet, since you and me were marrows in the stand at the Fair," said he; "but I have had a better trade by the hand, and ye should be nane the waur o't. Grannie here tells me ye're no so able to work as ye were in yon days. I'm really sorry that I didna hear o' this sooner, but I'll try to mak up for't; only I think ye might hae gart the master drop me a line before it came to this."

Janet took up the tail of her apron, and wiping her eyes, which his kindness had made to over-

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flew, said, "I couldna think o' fashing you; and I had a hope that it would hae pleased the Lord to take me to himself before it was his will, for my good hereafter, to bend me down to seek an almous fae ony bodie; but I couldna help it—auld age, and an aching arm, soon made my bit beild toom o' plenishing; and when a' was gone, what could I do, for I could neither work nor want?"

"'Deed, Janet," replied Martha, "nobody says or thinks that it was idleset which brought you to the lone; for we a' ken it was a sore night that, afore ye could bring your mind to gang out in the morning. Many a saut tear and heavy heart was in the Clachan that day, at the sight of one that had so long ettled to keep up an appearance, at last obliged to go from door to door. But, Janet, Andrew will do something for you, and I'm blithe to say it's in his power, as I hope he'll no lack of the inclination."

"Noo that I hae got the better o' the shame," replied the poor old creature, "I maun just warsle on; the neighbours are a' as kind to me as they can afford; I only trust that the Lord will no leave me to grow bedrid—that's noo a' in this world that I fear."

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"But if He should," replied our hero, cheeringly, "He'll send some kindly hand to help you."

"Ay, so I thought once," said Janet, "and so I would fain hope still, for he has been gracious to me even in beggary, disposing the hearts of every body to compassion and sympathy; but when Mrs Bierston gaed away frae the Wood-side to live in Glasgow, I lost a good friend; she would ne'er hae alloo't me to die in neglect. However, poor leddy, she had her ain trials; for your old companion Charlie, her son, perished the pack, and they say has spoused his fortune and gone to Indy; I'm sure, gang where he will, a blessing will attend him, for he had a leil heart; and I hae a notion that mine wasna the sairest in the parish when we heard of his ganging abroad; for ever since Miss Mary Cunningham kent that it was me that keepit the stand at the Fair for you and him, she's been aye kinder and kinder; and her and me has mony a crack about you and him, when I gang on the Saturdays to The Place."

"They would hae been a braw couple," said our hero's grandmother; "and I ne'er heard till

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nae a right because for Miss Mary being so skeigh to a' her other joes."

Andrew was not entirely pleased with this information; for although persuaded that no attachment had existed on the part of Pierston, it was possible that Mary Cunningham might have cherished some early affection for him; and he was on the point of turning away, in the absence of the moment produced by the remark of the old woman, when his grandmother again reminded him to give Janet something. Ashamed of his inattention, he immediately said, "No; my auld coppartner mamma receive sic gifts ony mair;—Janet, ye'll come hame and tak your supper wi' us; and as the maister's to be there, we'll consult wi' him what's best to be done for you."

"Na, na," exclaimed the poor old woman, bursting suddenly into tears, "I'll no do that; I canna noo sit down on an equality wi' ony body that I hae fashed for alms. I'll no disgrace neither you nor your grandmother wi' my company; but whatsoever you and the master are content to do for me, I'll tak in thankfulness; but it has pleased the

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Lord to chastise me with the humiliation of beggary, and I'm resigned to His will. I would fain hope, however, that He'll no just carry His righteous dispensation so far as to leave me to perish like a dog at a dyke-side—that's neo a' my anxiety."

The Baronet was deeply affected by the lowliness of this burst of affliction, and the honest sense of pride that it breathed.

Martha again assured the mendicant that she would be taken care of. "Though it werena in the power of Andrew," said she, "to do the needful, there's mony kindly neighbours, Janet, that respect you; and we a' think that what has been your case may be our ain, so ye shouldna be just so cast down, but come away and tak a bit of our supper."

"No the night," replied Janet, drying her eyes —"no the night:" and rising from the wall on which she had been resting, she moved to go homeward, which was in a different direction from that of Martha's cottage.

Our hero then gave her what silver he had about him, saying, "Tak that, Janet, for erls of some-

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thing better; and be sure and come to grannie's in the morning."

The unhappy creature could not speak, but grasped his hands in both hers, and watered them with the tears of her gratitude.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FIRE-SIDE.

In the meantime the Craiglands family were discussing the events of the day; and the Laird was not the least dogmatical of the group, although perhaps not the wisest. "I dinna understand," said he, "a' this wark about Martha Docken's eye. That English Lord and his Leddy mak him joke-fellow wi' themselves; but the Englishers, as it is weel known, are no overladen with discretion—that's a certain fact. But how Andrew came to the degree of a Bauronet, is a thing I would fain hear the rights o'. Howsever, I'm thinking that your Bauronets noo-a-days are but, as a body would say, the scum that's cast uppermost in times o' war and trouble."

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"Ay, but, brother," said Miss Mizy, "Sir Andrew's a great and wealthy man, and a Member of Parliament; and ye hae heard how Mary and me found him on a footing with the Duchess of Dashingwell, and a' the nobility, which was just confounding."

"Ye have said sae," replied the Laird; "but everybody kens that Duchesses, especially o' the English breed, are nae better than they should be."

"But you forget, sir," interposed Mary, "that Lady Margaret is sister-in-law to her Grace; and when she gave us letters to the Duchess, she not only assured us that she was a lady of unblemished honour, but beloved and esteemed by all her friends."

"Ye wouldna surely hae had Leddy Margaret," said the Laird, "to speak ill of her sin kith and kin."

"But Sir Andrew," resumed Miss Mizy, "has made a great fortune, and has bought the estate of Wylie."

"Is't paid for?" interrupted the Laird. "I would like to ken that."

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"I should think," said Mary, diffidently, "that he must be a man of merit and ability; for you know, sir, that he had but his own conduct for his patron, and he has acquired both riches and honour."

"But how did he acquire them?" cried the Laird, sharply. "Any body may acquire riches and honour!—the road is open baith to gentle and semple. But, thanks be and praise, the democraws are no just able yet to mak themselves men o' family."

"It is not likely that Sir Andrew is a democrat; neither his associates nor his inclinations, or I am much mistaken," replied Mary, "lie that way."

"Wha made you a judge?" exclaimed the Laird.

"I do not affect any judgment in the matter," was the answer; "I only think——"

"What business hae ye to think? Is't not as clear as a pike-staff that trade and traffic are to be the ruin o' this country. In a few years, it's my opinion, they'll no be sic a thing as a gentleman.

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There's that poor mean-spirited body Monkgreen, wha was aye ettling to improve and improve his lands, like a common farmer, and wha cut down the fine auld trees o' his grandfather's planting, to set up his sons as Glasgow merchants—What has he made o't? His auld son, Robin, they say, stands behint a counter gieing out wabs to tambourers. Willy, the second, is awa' wi' a pack among the niggers to the West Indies; and his only dochter, she's drawn up wi' a manufacturer, which in broad Scotch means just a weaver. In another generation, a' that we'll hear o' the auld respectis family of Monkgreen, will be something about a sowan-cog or a sugar-hoggit. I wouldna be surprised to see a clecking o' blackent weans coming hame frae Jamaica, crying 'Massa-gran-pa' to Monkgreen yet, before he died—it's a judgment he weel deserves."

"I am surprised, my dear father, that you entertain such prejudices against those who rise in the world by their talents and merits. The founders of all families must have sprung originally from the people," said Mary, with a persuasive accent.

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"True, Mary, my dear—that's very true," replied the Laird; "but there's some difference between a family come of the sword, and ane o' the shuttle."

"Ay, brother; but Sir Andrew Wylie's no frae the loom, but the law," said Miss Mizy.

"That's ten times waur," cried the Laird. "Every body kens that lawyer is just another name for cheater. Wasna I obligated to pay James Gottera seventeen pounds odd shillings for outlay, and the price of the cow that happened to die, by me accidentally poking my stick in her e'e when she was riving down the hedge? Was there ever such injustice heard o'?—and that came o' the law."

"I doubt, sir," said Mary, "that with these sentiments you and the Baronet are not likely to become very intimate."

"Bauronet! Bauronet! What gars the lassie aye cast up that Bauronet to me; I dinna like to hear sic havers. Bauronet!—Set him up and shuve him forward. Martha Docken's oye a Bauronet!"

The conversation continued in this strain for

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some time, till Miss Mizy again reminded her brother that Sir Andrew had bought the Wylie estate. "They say," said she, "that he paid mair than thirty thousand pounds for't."

"Barrow't money! Barrow't money!" exclaimed the Laird. "What's to hinder folk frae buying estates with heritable bonds?"

"But the Baronet,"—Mary was proceeding to say, when her father interrupted her peevishly.

"Bauronet again! Wilt thou ne'er devaul with that Bauronetting? Tak him to you and his Bauronetcy."

"I'm sure she may get far waur," replied Miss Mizy; "for he's a sensible man, and ye saw how he was deferred to by the Lord and his Leddy, and how Sir Archibald and Leddy Margaret made o' him."

"They hae their ain ends for that," retorted the Laird.

"Ends! What ends?" cried Miss Mizy, raising her voice.

"Ends here, or ends there," replied the Laird, doggedly, "it's time to end this clishmaclaver; I want to hear nae mair o't, so dinna fash me." And

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with that he leant his head aside on his easy chair, and seemingly fell asleep.

"I wonder," said Mary, in a suppressed voice, to her aunt, "what can make my father cherish such antipathy again Sir Andrew."

"It's no so meikle against him, as it's against the new-made gentry in general," said Miss Mizy.

"I'm no sleeping," said the Laird, by way of admonishing them to refrain from the subject; and raising himself, he added, "I have been thinking on what we were discoursing about; and, sister, if Sir Andrew mak's a proposal to you, I'll no object to the match."

"Me!" exclaimed the elderly maiden—"Proposals to me!"

Mary laughed, and said, "How do you imagine, sir, that he has any such intention?"

"I saw wi' the tail o' my e'e that he was unco couthy with her mair than ance."

"Brother," replied Miss Mizy," how can sic an absurdity enter your head?"

"Then what the deevil mak's you sae hyte about the fallow?" cried the Laird. "But we'll see what's to happen;—a' I can say is, I'll no ob-

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jek; for really, sister, ye hae nae time to spare." And chuckling with delight at this brilliant sally, the Laird rose, and, lifting one of the candles, left the ladies for some time to discuss the subject by themselves.

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CHAPTER XXV.

A SERVING LASS.

The maid-servant who looked into the dining-room, to tell Miss Cunningham of Lord and Lady Sandyford, was no ordinary character in her walk of life. Except once, to see the draught race on the Saturday of Marymas Fair at Irvine, she had never been out of the jurisdiction of the parish of Stoneyholm. In her appearance she was, even for her condition, uncommonly rustic; but random gleams of shrewdness and intelligence occasionally shewed that she was not altogether the simpleton which her acquaintance in general thought. Her father was the parish beadle, or betherel, as that dignitary is called in Scotland, and in addition to the wonted duties of

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his office, followed as a profession the calling of a weaver.

While she was a little girl running about the doors, Mr Tannyhill happened to be pleased with some whimsical trait in her playfulness, and took her under his own particular care, teaching her not only all the little that he commonly taught the other children; but finding her apt, and possessed of a taste for reading, he instructed her in the Latin language, and in time produced what he considered a most accomplished classical school lass. Bell Lampit, however, acquired no blue stocking airs: she grew up to womanhood unconscious of any superior attainments, and was not otherwise distinguished from her companions, than by being perhaps a little less attentive to dress.

About the age of eighteen she was hired into the Craigdands family, as an under-housemaid; and she might, at the period of which we are now speaking, be described as a queer-looking girl, with ragged locks, long red legs, a short jupe, and a merry eye. In the capacity, however, of a servant, the advantages of the education which

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the master had conferred, were soon manifested in various ways. Instead of singing melodious ditties, like her companions, to cheer the tasks of household drudgery, Bell commonly repeated aloud to herself the choicest passages of the English and classic poets; and it was not uncommon to hear her, in bottling small beer, joyously recite, as she turned the cock, some social verse from Anacreon or Horace. One forenoon, a short time before Sir Andrew's return, when we happened to call at The Place, and were induced by the Laird to stay dinner, we heard her, as she picked a fowl that was put to death on our account, declaim, with good emphasis, the whole of Dryden's Ode. Suiting the action to the word, she tore the feathers with appropriate unison to the varied enthusiasm of the poetry; nor would it be easy to imagine a finer burst of fervour, than the energy with which she flourished the hen by the legs round her head, as she exclaimed,

"And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder."

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But for all this, her merits as a housemaid were not of a high order; on the contrary, when we expressed our admiration of her accomplishments to Miss Mizy, that thrifty lady declared she was "a glaikit and negleetfu' tawpy, that couldna be trusted to soop the house, if a book or a ballad was left in her way."

Among other endowments, Bell enjoyed from nature an irresistible propensity to communicate to others some account of whatever she heard or saw. Lord and Lady Sandyford's visit, with the consideration in which it was understood they treated Sir Andrew, sent her cackling to the village, as soon as she obtained Miss Mizy's permission to go out, on the wonted pretext of every maid-servant's Sunday evening excursions, both in town and country, that is, to see her parents. And about the time that our hero and his grandmother were conversing with cripple Janet, she was expatiating with all the elocution of her nature, to a numerous assemblage of the villagers, on the events which had that day taken place at the Craiglands.

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The result of her narrative did credit to the sagacity of her auditors, for they came to the unanimous conclusion, that Sir Andrew and Miss Mary would be speedily married, as they were, no doubt, betrothed to each other from the time that the young lady, with her aunt, had visited London. This idea was, in part, suggested by some observations which the erudite Bell had made, while assisting Robin Taigle to serve the table during dinner. But although it was in so far her own suggestion, it yet, nevertheless, operated upon her with the force of a new impetus, and she could no more refrain from indulging herself in the delight of being the first to tell the news to her fellow-servants, than in the other case she could withstand her propensity to inform her parents and the neighbours, of every circumstance that she had seen or guessed respecting the visit of the English Lord and his Lady.

It happened, however, that Bell, in her eagerness to be delivered of the tidings with which her fancy was so big, rushing brimful into the servants' hall, did not observe that

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Miss Mizy was there inspecting a closet with a candle.

"O, what will I tell you a'!" was her exclamation; "Sir Andrew's come down from London to be married to our Miss Mary."

"What's t'ou saying, Bell," cried Miss Mizy, starting from the closet, and blowing out the candle as she set it down on the table.

"'Deed, mistress, it's a' the clatter of the town—what a' say maun be true," was the reply.

With whatever sensations Miss Mizy received this information, she said nothing to the servants, but went immediately to the dining-room, where the Laird was sitting asleep in his easy chair, while Miss Mary was reading aloud to him one of Blair's sermons.

"Mary, what do ye think that haverel jillet, Bell Lampit, has heard in the clachan?" said Miss Mizy, in a sort of exulting whisper.

Mary shut the book, and the Laird turned his head to the other side of the easy chair, as if in his slumber he sought the sound which had lulled him asleep.

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"How should I know?" replied the young lady, somewhat surprised at the spirits into which the news seemed to have raised her aunt.

"They say ye're to be married to Sir Andrew!" exclaimed Miss Mizy, lifting her hands in token of the admiration with which she enjoyed the intelligence, and the triumph which it gave her over her niece, who had so often slighted her prognostications with respect to his grandeur and greatness.

Mary laughed, and said, "I should not wonder if the story has taken its rise from daft Jamie, who, in the fulness of his heart, for the sixpence he got from Sir Andrew, advised me to marry him."

But her mirth was not so deep as her heart, and she experienced the influence of a strange presentiment thrill through all its pulses, in connexion with a sudden rush into her fancy, of every incident associated in her recollection with the image of our hero.

"I wonder what your father will say till't," cried Miss Mizy; and she moved round towards

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the easy chair, for the purpose of rousing the Laird.

But Mary interposed, saying, "I am surprised that you should be so taken up with this nonsense—I beg you won't disturb my father—consider his prejudices. It will only vex him to suppose such a thing possible."

"Possible!" exclaimed Miss Mizy; "my lass, ye may be thankfu' if ye'll get the offer—to be the Lady of that Ilk—Na, na, Mary, it's no to be expectit that a Baronet, hand and glove wi' Lords and Duchesses yonder, will come frae London to speir your price."

"I am astonished to hear you speak so lightly of such a thing," replied Miss Cunningham; "for I am persuaded, that if the creature Wheelie were to offer, there is not one in the world would be more disposed to send him off with a short answer than yourself."

"It's my fear he'll no try," was the tartish answer of the old lady; "so ye needna, Mary Cunningham, gie yoursel sic airs—and ca' the grapes sour that ye canna reach—like the tod in Esop's

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fable—So I will tell your father, for it's but right and proper to prepare him for the news."

Mary made no answer, but rising abruptly, suddenly quitted the room, while Miss Mizy, going round to the easy chair, shook the Laird awake.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

A DEBATE.

"Sister," said the Laird, rubbing his eyes as Miss Mizy disturbed his slumber, "what for will ye no let a body sleep? Ye ne'er devaul, wi' ae thing or another, frae keeping me in het water."

"I wonder how ye can think o' dozing at that gait; it's enough to turn your brains to oil," replied his sister. "But there's great news in the town."

"Ay, and what are they? Is Boney put out o' the way at last?" said Craiglands, rousing himself into as much life as possible.

"It's something far more extraordinar," replied Miss Mizy, "and what I'm no thinking ye'll be so weel pleased to hear."

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"How do ye ken whether I'll be weel or ill pleased?" retorted the Laird peevishly. "It's an unco thing that ye maun aye be argol-bargoling wi' me in that gait. I can get nae rest for you by night or by day."

"I ken very weel," in a tone quite as sharp, was Miss Mizy's answer; "and every body kens that, that kens you."

"Every body kens, Miss Mizy, that thou's a cankery creature, and that had thou no been sae, I might hae been quat o' thee lang syne; but nae fool cast up that would be fashed wi' thee."

"Weel, weel, maybe ye'll no be muckle langer plagued wi' me; for if the news are true that I have heard, I'll soon hae a better steading for mysel."

"Thae maun be great news, indeed," said the Laird, with an accent approaching to the tone of wonder. "And what are they? It maun be an ill wind to somebody that will blaw nae good to the Craiglands."

"An ye will hae't, ye shall hae't," retorted the justly-offended gentlewoman. "They say Sir Andrew and your dochter's to be married."

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"Wha dares to say the like o' that?" cried the Laird.

"There noo! ye see what I foretold's come to pass," exclaimed Miss Mizy. "Didna I tell you that the tidings boded nae daffin' to you?"

"And how do you know whether they bode daffin' or dule?" replied Craiglands, a little taken aback. "A' that I can say is, that I dinna believe ae word o't."

"It's very little to the purpose whether ye believe it or no; but if the marriage is to be, what will ye sae till't?" rejoined Miss Mizy.

"I'm sure it would be a kittle question for me to answer," retorted the Laird, "gin there was ony sic benison in the bargain as a clear house o' thee. But it's no a thing of ony sort o' probability at a', and Mary Cunningham would ne'er tryst hersel without my conivance."

"As for that," cried Miss Mizy, triumphing in the commotion which the news had evidently raised in her brother's mind, "she's her father's ain bairn, a chip o' the auld block; and it's my opinion, that were Sir Andrew really to make an

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offer, she would refuse him, out of the contrarie spirit that she inherits frae—I'll no say wha."

"Mizy, thou hadst ne'er a gude word o' ony body," replied the Laird; "and it says but little for thee to misliken thy ain niece, who is baith a gude-tempered and an obedient lassie, twa things that ne'er could be said o' that side o' the house that ye're come o'."

"Weel, haud your ain part gude, brother; but unless I'm far wrang," was the lady's emphatic reply, "ye'll maybe find, if the matter comes to a trial, wha's in the right."

The Laird, instead of responding, stretched out his hand, and taking his staff, which stood at his side, knocked sharply on the floor.

"What do you want?" inquired his sister.

But, instead of answering her question, he repeated the knocking, and Robin Taigle appeared to his summons.

"Gar ane o' the lasses," said his master, "tell my dochter to step this way."

"What do you want wi' her?" exclaimed Miss Mizy.

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"I'm her father, and it's none of your business, for ye're but her aunty—mind that."

Robin having retired, in the course of about a minute after, the shrill tongue of Bell Lampit was heard crying, at the foot o' the stair, "Hey, Miss Mary, come down, and pacify the Laird, for he's wud wi' Miss Mizy."

"The de'il do me gude o' that tawpy!" exclaimed the old gentleman; "I wonder how I hae been able to thole her sae lang; she would hae skreighed in the same fool fashion, an the house had been fou o' strangers.—Bell Lampit, ye limmer, wha taught you to speak in that disrespectfu' way o' me?"

Bell, on hearing herself named, opened the dining-room door, and looking in from behind it, said, "What's your wull, maister?"

"That's my wull," cried the Laird, and he flung the staff at her head. "There ne'er surely was a poor man driven so demented as I am by a wheen idiot women."

Miss Cunningham, on hearing herself summoned, immediately came down stairs, and the

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moment she entered the room, her father said, in a soothing and coaxing manner, "Mary, my love, this misleart aunty of yours has been garring me trow that ye're a cross-grained ettercap like hersel, and in no ae thing will do my bidding, an I were ne'er so urgent?"

"I trust and hope, that it is not your disposition, sir," replied Mary, "to ask of me any thing so unreasonable as that I should refuse."

"That's a leddy!" exclaimed the Laird. "Noo, Mizy, what do you say to that? Is there ony contrarie spirit there?"

"But ye havena tried her?" exclaimed the aunt, anticipating an entire confirmation of her opinion. "See if she'll consent to marry Sir Andrew Wylie; try her wi' that, brother?"

"I think," said Mary, a little fervently, "it will be time enough when Sir Andrew requests him."

"Vera right, Mary—a sensible observe," was the Laird's answer. "We'll gut nae fish till we get them; and I hope your aunty will tak warning after this night, and no molest me wi' her

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sedition. But, noo that we hae come to a right understanding, I would like to ken how the clash has risen?"

Miss Cunningham herself had a little curiosity on the subject as well as her father; for, although she considered daft Jamie as the original author, she had a feminine inclination to know the particulars of all that was reported. Accordingly, after some brief consultation, it was resolved that Bell Lampit should be called in and examined. The Laird's stick was still lying on the floor, when Bell, on being summoned, entered, and she lifted it up, and held it out to him by the end, with a gawky look of trepidation.

"What's this, Bell," said her master, setting the stick in its wonted place, "that ye hae brought from the clachan the night?"

"I brought naething, sir," replied Bell, with the most perfect and sincere simplicity.

"Ca' ye't naething to be raising a rippet in the house about Sir Andrew Wylie and Miss Cunningham?" exclaimed Miss Misy. "The Laird wants to ken what is't that ye hae heard."

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"O just a wheen havers, Miss Mizy—just a wheen havers," replied Bell—"causey talk—Vox populi!"

"Vox deevils!" cried the Laird. "But what do they say?"

"That Sir Andrew would hae been married to Miss Mary lang ago; but ye wouldna part wi' her tocher, till he could count pound and pound wi' you twice o'er," replied Bell.

"It's a confounded lee!" exclaimed the Laird indignantly, while both Miss Mizy and Mary laughed.

"I said it was a lee," replied Bell; "and some thought it wasna come to pass, that ye would ever consent to let Miss Mary tak him, though he had the main's more."

"Wha thought sae? and what business had they to be making or meddling in the matter?" cried the Laird.

"'Deed, sir," said Bell, "I said that I didna think Miss Mary would ever tak sic a tee totum, as Wheelie."

"And wha the deevil speer't your counsel

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ment it!" exclaimed the Laird. "Ye bardy loon, gae but the house, and mind your wark.—Ye thought, and they thought—but if it wasna mair for ae thing than another, I hae a thought that would gar baith you and them claw whar its no yeuky."

"Bell, leave the room," said Mary; and she added to her father, "You have judged very properly, sir. It is not right to allow servants to speak so familiarly. Her remark on Sir Andrew's appearance was highly unbecoming."

"She's a half-witted creature," replied the Laird, restored to his wonted composure. "Sir Andrew, in my opinion, is a very decent man of his stature."

"He's a very sensible man, which is mair to the purpose," rejoined Miss Mizy.

"What ken ye about sense, Mizy? Hegh, woman, but ye hae made a poor shew o' yours this night," said the Laird exultingly; and he continued, "Come, Mary, my dawty, lend me your arm, and help me up the stair to my room.—Gude night, Mizy, and the next time ye prog-

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nosticate, I redde you to look better at the Almanack."

In saying these words, he broke out into one of his loudest and longest gaffaws, at the conclusion of which, leaning on his daughter's arm, he left the room.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

A DREAM.

When our hero retired for the night to the small chamber which had been constructed at the back of his grandmother's cottage, he sat down and ruminated on the events of the day. A large predominance of pleasure had undoubtedly been enjoyed, but the comment of Cripple Janet, on the cause of Mary Cunningham's kindness to her, threw long and wavering shadows of doubt and apprehension over the hopes which the incidents in other respects had unfolded; and it seemed to him, that although he had reached the Table land of fortune, there was a deep and dark ravine between him and the desired object of his perseverance and pursuit. He had been hitherto engaged with affairs wherein his own passions had no concern, and no obstacle had impeded his career, or

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taught him to apprehend that he might not reach the goal of his ambition. While he therefore acknowledged, that in all external circumstances he had been enabled to surpass even his wishes, he could not disguise from himself, that there are aims in life of more difficult attainment than even riches and honours. He felt that there was an immeasurable difference between the disinterested dictates of gratitude, and the desires and sentiments which spring from passion. In the affair of Lord and Lady Sandyford, he was free and decisive; but in seeking the consummation of his own happiness, doubts and diffidence paralyzed his resolution. It seemed to him, that in his own case, comparatively, nothing depended on himself, and every thing on the acquiescence of another's will and affections.

"If," said he to himself, as he sat on the bedside, "Mary Cunningham has been a' this time thinking only on Charlie Pierston, I wish I had kent it before he went to Indy, for I think it would have been a pleasure to have helped them to happiness; and I had no need to be gripping and

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gathering in the way I have done, had it no been to make myself a stair to mount to an equality with her. 'To make the crown a pound young Jamie gaed to sea,'—but after all, Robin Gray got Jenny. Weel, I canna help it. But ae thing I can do—I can prove that I wasna unworthy of her love. I'll try the morn's morning to discover how her mind lies, and if she prefers Charlie, I'll write to him to come hame, and I'll gie him the estate o' Wylie to mak a kirk and a mill o't wi' her.—For I'll no fash mysel ony mair wi' this world's pelf and the blatherie o't."

With this determination he began to undress, but in the course of a few seconds he forgot himself, and again sat down, saying,—

"Surely Mary Cunningham's no the only ane that I might think of,—I wonder how it is that I have fancied her so long. She's neither so bonny nor so blithesome as fifty others I hae seen; I have been just the fool of that calf love, bred o' the fifty psalms and the headstane. I wouldna be surprised to hear she made me the laughing-stock o' a' her acquaintance, for she was just a deevil for making diversion o' me among them lang syne.—

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No: it canna be that she has any notion o' Charlie—He, I'm sure, had nane o' her—that's a certain thing—for he was a wild ramplor lad, and would ne'er hae run sic ram races had he felt a right true and faithful affection as I did. But what signifies that?—its a' ane to me if her fancy runs on him, for I'll ne'er take a portion of a divided heart.—But the sooner I get at the bottom of this the better." And with that he undressed, and throwing himself carelessly into bed, all the transactions of his past life floated through his mind, in connexion with the image of Mary Cunningham; and suddenly the form of Pierston was seen standing near him. He looked at him, and he appeared pale and feeble, and pointing with his hand to a picture, on which appeared the distant view of an oriental city. In the foreground of the landscape was a cemetery, with several tombs, and on one of them he saw the name of Pierston inscribed. In the surprise of the moment, he turned round to ask his friend what it meant. But the morning sun shone brightly in his eyes, and the vision of the picture and of his friend had vanished with his waking.

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There was something in the circumstances of this dream which made him averse to sleep again; and having dressed himself, he walked out.

In passing from the village to the high-road, he saw the Master before him, walking quickly, with the front of his cocked hat turned backwards, and the back slackened down for a shade to his eyes. Mending his pace, he soon came up to him.

The Dominie, on being addressed by the Baronet, shortened his steps, and they fell into conversation as they walked together respecting cripple Janet; the result of which was, that Sir Andrew was to settle on her a stipend sufficient to keep her comfortable as a boarder with some one of the cottars. "By which," said the Master, "ye'll bespeak twa good words aboon, by one good action here; for the stipend will be a help to some other, as well as a consolation to Janet."

By the time they had discussed this arrangement, they arrived at the end of the lane which led from the hamlet to the high-road. It was not our hero's intention to go farther, and he halted; while the Master continued to improve his pace.

"Where away so fast?" said the Baronet.

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"Oh," replied the Master, "I have had great news. A young lad that I kent at the college, is come hame from some foreign part; and last night when I left you, I found a letter from him, sent frae Irvine, bidding me to come and see him at the Cross-keys Inns there this morning. We were great companions when laddies; but I thought he was dead and gane mony a year and day ago; he was a clever chappie, and used to say, if ever he made a fortune he would get me a kirk."

"A kirk!" said the Baronet,—"I didna know that ye were a preacher."

"Watty Ettle used to say I was a vera gude ane; but I had nae frien's to help me forward, so what was the use of my preaching?" replied the innocent Dominie.

"But are you qualified to accept a living?" exclaimed Sir Andrew, feeling something between pain and pleasure—never before having heard or imagined that Mr Tannyhill possessed any dignity beyond those which he held in the parish of Stoneyholm.

"Ay," replied the Master, "I was licensed; but since I preached my first sermon in the Ba-

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rony-kirk o' Glasgow, I have never had courage to mount another pulpit; for, oh I was terribly frightened that day: when I gave out the first Psalm, ye might have heard my heart beating at the far end o' the kirk."

"I'm glad to hear this," said the Baronet to himself, audibly.

"What for should it make you glad? for it was the breaking of my bread, and made me fain to seek the lowly bield of a parish-school, where, for more than five-and-twenty years, I have been delving sand and washing Ethiopians," replied the mild and modest licentiate, in the reproving accent of expostulation.

"My worthy friend," said our hero, "ye cannot think I would hurt your feelings; I was only glad to hear that you are qualified to accept a parish. I think it's no beyond my power to get you one. But go to your old friend, and when you return I'll expect to see you."

The gentle and ingenuous Dominie could scarcely comprehend the import of these words; so much did the Baronet still appear the simple boy he had known as Wheelie. But after they had separated,

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he began to reflect on all that had passed; and by the time he reached the minister's carse of Irvine, he had formed a tolerably correct idea in what manner it might be in the power of a Baronet and a Member of Parliament to procure him a parish.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

PRIDE.

"I'M thinking, sister," said Craiglands, when he came down stairs to breakfast, "that it's no just what is proper in our family to gang to Auchinward on a visitation, in a barrow't coach. We're bound, out o' a respect to oursels, to let those Englishers see that we hae coaches of our ain as gude as theirs; so ye'll tell Robin Taigle to put his horses in order for the road, and to snod himsel for a decency on the present occasion."

Miss Mizy agreed that it would assuredly be more becoming the dignity of the family to go in their own carriage; for, as she very sapiently observed, "although the Lord and the Lady promised to send the coach for us, there was no word said about sending us back."

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Miss Mizy perhaps in this judged of them by herself. Robin Taigle, however, was ordered to get the equipage ready in due time; so that, when Mary entered the room, she was informed of the change made in the arrangement, and that Sir Andrew would have the lord's carriage to himself.

"I'm glad of it," said Mary; "for really, after the nonsense we heard last night, I do think we could not go with propriety to Auchinward together. There is no need to countenance the foolish notions which one cannot prevent foolish people from taking into their heads."

Whether any change had taken place during the night in the Laird's reflection, or whether, in the debate of the preceding evening, he had been only actuated by his habitual apprehension of Miss Mizy interfering too particularly with those concerns which he considered entirely his own, but which were not the less under her supreme authority, by his so doing, it is certain, that in the morning all his family prejudices were as giants refreshed, and that during breakfast, he spoke in

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the most contemptuous manner on the ludicrous idea of Martha Docken's eye being evened to his daughter. Nay, he actually went so far as to joke with Mary on the subject, till he brought the crimson blood into the bloom of her cheeks and the alabaster of her neck and bosom.

"It is," said she, "the most extraordinary thing I ever knew, that without the slightest reason, such an idea should have arisen. Wheelie, for truly I can call him by no other name or title, is very well to laugh with and laugh at. But——" and she paused.

"But what?" cried Miss Mizy, who never gave up her opinion to living mortal; and she added, "I'm sure he's your equal in consequence ony day. Thir's no the days of antiquity—a baronet's a man of some degree—and Mary, ye canna disown that he was farther ben among the great than ony other body we met wi' in London. My solid judgment is, and I have had a consideration o' the subject, that Wheelie, whom, by the King's proclamation, we are behadden to call Sir Andrew, is a dungeon o' wit, the like of whilk is no to be

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met wi' out o' the presence o' the fifteen Lords in Edinburgh, and I jalouse there are but few like him even there."

"He may be a great man," replied Mary, laughingly, "but he is certainly a wee bodie."

The Laird, who was in the act of rapping an egg with a tea-spoon, set both down, and throwing himself back in his chair, laughed immoderately for about a minute, at the end of which he resumed the tea-spoon and the egg as gravely as if he had never been laughing at all.

"Howsever," said the judicious Miss Mizy, "since we're no to go in Lord Sandyford's coach wi' Sir Andrew, I think we should let him know that we go thegither by oursels in our own carriage."

"Certainly," replied Mary, "it would be exceedingly rude to do otherwise;" and the Laird, declaring his abhorrence of all rudeness, especially if there was any chance of it coming to the ears of the Englishers, acquiesced. Bell Lampit was accordingly called in to be instructed in the requisite particulars of a mission to our hero.

"Ye'll gang," said Miss Mizy, "to Martha

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Docken's, and gie our compliments to Sir Andrew."

"Ye'll do no sic things, Bell," exclaimed the Laird; "ye'll take no compliments from me—That would be to gie the fallow encouragement."

"Bell," interposed Miss Cunningham," go to Sir Andrew and say, that as my father finds himself well enough to dine at Auchinward to-day, we shall go with him in our own carriage; so that it will be unnecessary for him to call here for us with Lord Sandyford's."

"It's vera extraordinar," cried Miss Mizy, "that neither the one nor the ether of you vill allow me to gie the lassie a right instruction.—Bell, ye'll gang to Sir Andrew, and say that it's no convenient for us to depend upon any other carriage than our own for the retour at night, so we intend just to gang by oursels."

"I'm sure," exclaimed the Laird, "I see nae need for a' this pro forma. "I'm no for summering and wintering about the matter."

Bell, being thus instructed, lost no time in proceeding to the village.

In the course of the walk, she ruminated as

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most maiden ministers do who are entrusted with messages—perhaps all messengers, male and maiden, do the same—and the result of her cogitations was, that the family had resolved to reject Sir Andrew's matrimonial proposals.

Under this impression, on reaching the cottage-door of old Martha, she pulled the latch, and just looking in, as the Baronet was sitting at breakfast with his grandmother, said, "Sir Andrew, ye maun find the road to Auchinward by yoursel, for there's nae room for you in our chaise."

"What did ye say, lassie?" replied our hero, partly guessing, but not exactly understanding the purport of the message.

"Dinna heed the donsie creature," said Martha. "It's the betherel's daft dochter—poor thing, she was a harmless bairn—a wee silly; but the Maister taught her Latin, and made her an idiot."

Bell by this time had entered the cottage, and, taking a seat uninvited, began to swing herself backwards and forwards, repeating Jupiter's speech to the Gods from Pope's Homer.

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"Hand thy tongue, Bell, wi' sic havers, and tell us what thou was saying," said Martha.

"I was saying naething, but only that our folk are a' gaun to Auchinward on their high horses."

"Ay! and what's gart them mount them?" inquired Sir Andrew.

"It's far frae my aught to say," replied Bell; "but I hae a notion their no overly pleased about something ye maybe ken what."

"Me!" exclaimed the Baronet, and he suddenly checked himself; while Bell unrequested began to give his grandmother her own version of what had occurred during the conversation which took place when she received her instructions. But our hero soon cut her short, saying, "Weel, weel, gae away hame, and gie my compliments to the Laird, and say that I am glad to hear he is so well this morning, and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing him at Auchinward. And, Bell, as ye hae had some trouble in the business, there's twa shillings to buy a ribbon."

"Na, na," cried Bell, starting up, and rushing towards the door, "that would be bribery, rank bribery," and she fled from the cottage as fast as

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her heels could carry her about twenty paces, when, her feminine inclinations overcoming her classical integrity and principles, she returned, and, with a gawky laugh, held out her hand, and received the money.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Soon after the retreat of Bell Lampit, the Master having returned from his visit to his old college companion, came into the cottage. He appeared deeply dejected, and brought in his hand a letter sealed with black, which he laid on the table without speaking, and sitting down, heaved a profound sigh.

Sir Andrew was in a brown study at the time, reflecting on the communication he had received from the Craiglands, and did not observe the emotion of Mr Tannyhill. But his grandmother said, "What's come o'er you the day, sir! and whar did ye get that letter?"

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The affectionate Dominie faltered as he replied—"I hae heard black news. I dinna ken when I met wi' sic a sore stroke. The letter's for Sir Andrew, and I doubt, though he'll hear o' great things in't, it'll gie him but sma' pleasure."

The Baronet's attention was roused by this, and he lifted the letter; but before breaking the seal, he turned round to the Master, and inquired how it happened to come into his hands.

"Watty Ettle brought it himsel, and he has come a' the way from London wi' the testament, to deliver it into your own hands," said Mr Tannyhill.

"Testament!" cried our hero, with surprise and agitation; and a chill and fearful sentiment passed through his mind, mingled with the remembrance of his dream and of Pierston.

"Poor Charlie's dead!" said the Master, with an accent of extreme sorrow.

Sir Andrew laid down the letter unopened, and involuntarily pushing back his chair, exclaimed, "Dead!"

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"Ay, he's gone, he died on the wide waters, and his body lies buried in the bottom o' the deep sea. He was seized with some severe ailment,—the doctors ordered him to try a change of climate, and he was coming home; but Death had laid his boney hand upon him forever, and wouldna slacken the grim grip—so blithe Charlie is no more. The warm heart is kneaded into cold clay, and the light spirit has departed on the wings of the morning, to that place where there is no separation, nor ither division but the boundaries of light and love."

Martha observing the impression which the news had produced on our hero, said, "I dinna wonder, Andrew, that ye're sorry; for ye had many a happy day wi' ane anither, before your young hearts had met wi' ony thing in the world to make you ken that a' thing in't is hard and rough, and ill to thole."

"Yes," observed the Master, taking up the reflection, "we never meet wi' friens like the friens o' our youth, when we hae lost them. I can sympathise wi' Wheelie," said the kind-

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hearted schoolmaster, forgetting in the moment all the events of the interval which had passed since he had used the epithet,—"for, in my green and glad days, there was a brisk wee laddie that I used to play wi' in the summer sunshine, and slide wi' on the winter's ice. The coal was cauld on the hearth of baith our parents, and we were obligated in time to seek our bread in the world. He gaed into Glasgow for his, and was prenticed to a ware-room; but still, about ance a year we met, and at ilka meeting the covenant o' our young friendship was renewed in our hearts. Belyve, when I had ta'en a turn for divinity, and had gathered, wi' the help o' friends, twa three pounds to tak me to the College, we lived thegither; our means were sma', and when they were like to wear out I was often very sad, but his spirit was made of light and joy, and he so seasoned our scrimpit meals wi' the happiness of his nature, that I still look back to the penury of the winter we passed thegither, as to the holly-bush, wi' its bonny red berries, standing green and bright amidst the snaw. He was a clever and a through-

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gawn lad, and grew to be a clerk wi' a great merchant, who sent him to a foreign place wi' a rich cargo—in the whilk he was to hae a profit. But when he got there, things werena as he had hoped, and his letters to me were ane after another more and more full of doubts and fears, and at last the merchant got ane that told he was dead. I kenna how it was, that at the time I didna experience such a sorrow as I should have felt, and I was vexed when I thought he was dead, and that I should have so little naturality—strangely, at times, fancying as if he could come back; but in time other cares and concerns grew upon me, and his image, like an epitaph that's overgrown by moss, was in a manner obliterated till many years after, when meeting by chance wi' a gentleman that knew him in that foreign land, we fell into discourse about him, and the stranger told me that he died of a broken heart—all the pride and hopes of his young expectations being blighted by the ill luck of the venture. It's no to be told what I then suffered; I pined, and was solitary, and I couldna eat. I dare say I would soon hae perish-

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ed with the thought of the blithe Jamie Haddow dying o' despondency, but for the freendliness of Wattie Ettle, that's brought home from India poor Charlie Pierston's will and testament, leaving you his total heir.—That letter's free hits, and he bade me tell you that the legacy is better than twenty thousand pounds."

It was even so. Pierston, according to the advice of his physicians, had been induced to try the benefit of a voyage from Bengal to the Cape; and before embarking, made a will, by which he bequeathed his whole property to his friend. At the same time, and in the same deed, he recommended to his care a natural child, whom he had named Roderick Random Pierston, adding, "In doing this, I know that I better serve my boy, than by leaving him ten times more than all I possess."

We shall not attempt to describe the feelings with which our hero was affected; but as soon as Mr Tannyhill left him to join his little flock in the school, he immediately wrote instructions to Mr Vellum to prepare a trust-deed, by which he assigned the whole of Pierston's property to the

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boy, the one-half of the amount it might realise to be paid when he reached the age of twenty-one; a fourth on his attaining that of thirty; and the remainder when he reached thirty-five.—"For," said the Baronet, in the letter to his partner, "if the chap takes after the nature of the father of him, he'll need the bridle."

In the performance of this generous duty, he enjoyed some relief from the effects of the shock he had suffered; and after dispatching a boy with the letter to the post-office in Kilwinning, he strolled into the fields with mingled feelings of regret and solicitude respecting the effect which the tidings of Pierston's death would have on Mary Cunningham. Numberless objects, as he sauntered along, reminded him of his deceased friend, and the sunny hours of their childhood. Heedless of his course, and lost in reverie, he walked as it were involuntarily towards a turn of the road where a large old tree was growing, against which, so entirely was his attention inwardly occupied, he suddenly stumbled; and being roused by the accident, he saw that it was the last of three elms, under the shadow of which he had often played,

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both with Willie Cunningham and Pierston. He looked at it for a moment, and the rush of recollections and of feelings which the sight called forth, suffused his heart and his eyes at the moment with tenderness and sorrow.

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CHAPTER XXX.

THE GRIEF OF DISTANT RELATIONS.

During the time that Sir Andrew was on the road from London with his noble friends, as they travelled leisurely, the news of Pierston's death, and the manner in which his fortune was bequeathed, had been communicated to his relations in Scotland. His mother being dead several years before; one of his aunts, Miss Peggy Picken, a maiden lady who resided in the Stockwell of Glasgow, was his nearest kin, and although on the maternal side, she was, notwithstanding, firmly persuaded that if there was any justice in law she should have been his rightful heir. Miss Peggy was not in very affluent circumstances, and twenty thousand pounds would have been to her an agree-

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able acquisition; indeed, for that matter we should ourselves have no objection, not even in the payment of that most hard tax the legacy duty, to receive a bequest to only half the amount at any time. Having been educated at the same seminary with the equally accomplished Miss Mizy, they had for more than forty years kept up an occasional correspondence. During the first fifteen of the period, their letters had been favoured with many pleasing anticipations, and amiable strictures on certain gentlemen, who, one after another, were deluded away from the circles of their haunts, by cunning and artificial women, who cajoled them to become their husbands; so that the two interesting spinsters had been most unaccountably left to spend their days in single blessedness. Miss Peggy Pickin had been in the practice of occasionally visiting her old friend at the Craiglands, but after Miss Mary retreated from Edinburgh, she was invited no more; the young lady having strangely fancied, that Miss Peggy was making a disparaging thrust at her father—a most extraordinary thing in a person come to so many years of discretion,

and she alarmed her aunt for the consequences. Still, however, Miss Misy now and then wrote to her when she required any article of dress from Glasgow, commissions which Miss Peggy was always exceedingly delighted to execute; and, on her part, she had sometimes occasion to thank Miss Misy for little remunerative presents for agency in the shape of poultry, kits of butter, and Dunlop cheese.

At the juncture of which we are now speaking, Miss Peggy having occasion to write her old companion, mentioned the death of Pierston, and bitterly complained of the "false," as she called it, "will and testament which the near-begun creature Wylie the lawyer had wheedled him to make, to the manifest injury of his own kith and kin." No explanatory comment was added to this observation, so that when Miss Misy read the letter to Mary and her father, which happened much about the time that our hero had strolled into the fields, the Laird expressed himself as perfectly of Miss Peggy Picken's opinion—"No man," said he, "that thinks under the cantrips and delusions of the law, would have been guilty of making such an instrument. Its my notion that Miss Peggy

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should try to get it proven that his nephew was non compos—and so break the will. But me mander, the Baronet, as we main nickname the bodie, has grown rich. To get silly dying folk in the delirium of a fever to leave us a' their conquest, is an easy way to make a fortune."

Miss Mizy partly agreed with her brother that the circumstances of the case ought to be investigated. "For if it could be come at," as she observed, "that there was a secret pact between Charlie Pierston and Sir Andrew, before he went to Indy, by that bilk he covenanted to make him his heir, it could neither stand wi' law nor justice, that those who had a right to his property should be cut off without a shilling."

Mary said nothing; the subject had thrown her into a pensive mood; and although she remained in the room, she sat silent, while her aunt and the Laird then leisurely discussed the case, until, differing upon some legal point, they came, as usual, to high words, which were, as usual, ended by the Laird turning the deaf side of his head towards his sister, and affecting to fall asleep.

In the mean time, Sir Andrew was standing

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ruminating near the elm tree, Lord Sandyford's coach, which, according to the arrangement, had been sent to bring the party to Auchinstark, came up. The servants on seeing him stopped, and he walked towards it, and was immediately admitted. Absorbed in his reflections, he neglected to tell them that it was unnecessary to go to The Place; and their instructions being to bring the family as well as him, they drove forward to the Craiglands; and were at the door, before he was aware of his inadvertency.

Miss Mary had, on the rupture of her attachment, retired with Mary to her own chamber; the Laird, in the morning, had put himself in order for the visit—and she was sitting in full attire with him when the carriage arrived. As there was no help for the Egoist but to explain how it happened, that, notwithstanding the message to the contrary, he had come in Lord Sandyford's coach, he alighted, and was shown into the parlour. Neither Craiglands nor his sister said any thing when they saw the carriage stop; but the former concluded in his own mind, that the Abbotsbury pretensions had been reinforced by his legacy,

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and that he had come expressly to make proposals for Mary. Miss Mizy had not actually arrived at the same conclusion, but she thought it a very pitiful incident, that after the message he had received, he should have come, and come too in the ostentation of Lord Sandyford's splendid equipage.

The tenor of these reflections was not calculated to produce any very urbane effect on their countenances; and our hero, on entering the room, was daunted by the solemnity of his reception. Mary at this time was still engaged with her toilet; and as she was not present, he inferred that her absence was to be attributed to the impression of Fierston's death. This idea had the effect of disconcerting him a little; nevertheless, he took so far mastered the chagrin of the moment as to say, "I beg your pardon, Laird, but in truth I was so much overtaken by the news of Mr Fierston's death, that I forgot your message; and the sensation, not a wire of the bell in our assignment of going to think inward, brought me here before I was sensible of my intention."

"It's no surprising that ye should be in a con-

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sternation," replied Craiglands,—"wha wouldna? It's no every acquaintance that, without regard to their ain kith and kin, leaves a bodie ale a power o' siller as I understand ye hae gotten by that thoughtless lad's death."

"Ye have surely your ain luck, Sir Andrew," said Miss Mizy; "I never heard the like o't—but it's a very extraordinar thing—very—that there wasna the value of a five-pound note for a ring to Miss Peggy Picken, his aunty.—No that she stan's in need o't, for she has saved money—but blood is thicker than water."

"I daresay if my poor friend had thought any of his relations stood in a condition to require the bettering of a portion in his gathering, he would hae made provision to that effect," replied Sir Andrew, surprised that they should be already so fully acquainted with so much of the business.

"Wha wouldna be the better o' a share in sic a fortune?" exclaimed the Laird.—"But, dear, I wish ye would inquire what has become of that daddling bodie, Robin; he's ayaint the fireside—and see if Mizy's ready."

The Baronet, who had felt himself excluded

nest to the heat of indignation, both by the matter and the manner of this short conversation, underwent a transition to a happier state of feeling, on hearing that Mary was expected to accompany her father and aunt; and when she soon after appeared with all her charms set off to the best advantage, the whole of his doubts and anxieties with respect to the state of her affections were dissolved; insomuch, that when Robin with the carriage at last came to the door, he could not refrain from expressing his regret that he was deprived of the pleasure of her company in Lord Sandyford's coach.

The Laird, assisted by him and one of the Earl's servants, was raised into the carriage, while Bell Lampit and the other maids were seen peeping from out the doors of the rooms that opened into the hall. Daft Jamie, who had been all the morning loitering about The Place, stood aloof while the embarkation was going on; but when he saw Lord Sandyford's spruce footman leap up behind the coach after closing the door on Sir Andrew, he stept forward, and as Robin began to lash his horses, crying "Jee, brutes," he

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took the similar station at the back of the Laird's carriage, amidst the laughter of the servants; Bell Lampit coming forward from her concealment, extravagantly clapping her hands.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

LADIES WITHOUT GENTLEMEN.

Lord Sandyford happened to be walking on the lawn in front of the house, with Sir Archibald, when the coach arrived; and, surprised to find it had brought only our hero, felt something like the sense of a rebuke when he saw him alight with a visible expression of thoughtfulness in his countenance, the effect of his reflections on the occurrences of the morning. For although Sir Andrew was convinced by the appearance of Mary Cunningham that he had nothing to apprehend from any attachment to Pierston, there was something in the behaviour both of the Laird and Miss Mizy, that revolted his feelings, even while it was ludicrous.

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The Earl went immediately to inquire how it had happened that he came alone, which the Baronet briefly explained, by stating, that the Laird finding himself well enough to visit, had ordered out his own carriage before the coach arrived. He then mentioned to his Lordship the news which he had received of Pierston's death, warmly eulogising the gratitude by which his friend seemed to have been actuated.

"But," said he, "I can see that his legacy to me will not give satisfaction to his kindred. I have, however, done my duty in it." And he then told the Earl what instructions he had sent to Vellum on the subject.

"Why, this is romance," said his Lordship; "you should have kept it to make weight against Craiglands' prejudices—at least for some time."

While they were thus conversing, being in the meantime joined by Sir Archibald, the Laird's equipage made its appearance, coming laboriously along the principal approach, Robin Taigle lashing with might and main his stubborn cattle, while daft Jamie, aping the consequentiality of a footman, was standing behind the carriage. The op-

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pearance of the whole pageantry was irresistibly ridiculous; insomuch, that both the Earl and Sir Archibald found themselves obliged to retire into the house, leaving our hero, who had more command of his features, to assist the visitors to alight.

The moment that Robin had effected a halt, Jamie jumped down, and with a grand air opened the door, and pulled down the steps.

"What! is that thee, Jamie?" cried the Laird; "How hast thou come here?"

"Ah, Laird, they'll has clear e'en and bent brows that'll see sic a flunkie as ye had the day, Craiglands."

The Laird and the ladies had, in the course of their journey, observed that every person they passed on the road stopped and laughed, and they felt strangely awkward, not knowing the cause. But the moment Jamie told the old gentleman the part he had performed, the Laird seized his stick, and gave him such a rap on the head, that he sent him yelling across the lawn.

"I'll flunkie thee!—to bring sic shame and disgrace on the like o' us," cried the Laird. He then accepted the proffered assistance of Sir Andrew's

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arm, without noticing who it was; and by the help of it, and of one of Sir Archibald's footmen, he alighted. The Baronet, not aware that he had been only accidentally unnoticed, felt considerably disturbed, when the Laird, with the intention of being gallant, turned his back on him, and pushing his extended arm aside, thinking it was a servant's, handed the ladies out himself.

"This is a little too much," said he to himself; and he walked away, half resolved at the moment to give up every thought of a connexion by which his endurance was likely to be so severely tried. But his anger was never at any time of long duration, and before he had walked twenty paces, the fume of the moment had evaporated, and, with a malicious playfulness, he resolved, since the Laird was determined to treat him with so little ceremony, that he would retaliate. Accordingly, on going into the drawing-room where the whole party was assembled, after paying his respects to Lady Margaret, he addressed himself to the Countess for a moment, who was sitting on a sofa with Mary Cunningham, and immediately entered into conversation with Lord Sandyford, without

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farther at that time noticing either Craiglands or Miss Mizy.

In taking places at the dinner-table, he hesitated for a moment whether to concede the left hand of Lady Margaret to the Laird; but before he had decided, her ladyship with a significant look said, "Sir Andrew, it is your place,"—and he stepped forward as if to take it, but turning round to the old gentleman who was confounded at finding himself of a lower note than Martha Dockens' oye, he said, "Age and antiquity, Laird, ye ken, are honours that time can alone bestow. The King may make a belted knight, but he canna an ancient family—so out of my respect for yours, I'll gie up my place."

The Laird thus uncouthly preferred, sat down in a state of profound perplexity, while Sir Andrew placed himself between the Countess and Mary.—But nothing surprised the old gentleman so much as the ease and confidence with which the Baronet conducted himself, contrasted with the diffidence of his behaviour on the preceding day at the Craiglands.

Miss Mizy had by this time in a great measure

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recovered from the impression of Miss Peggy Picken's letter, and our hero soon ingratiated himself again into her good graces by some of those little table civilities, which with ladies of a certain age, indeed of all ages—have the most agreeable influence; so that when she retired after dinner to the drawing-room, she was again the eulogist of his wisdom and singular great good fortune.

"He's really a funny body that Sir Andrew," said Miss Mizy.—"I couldna hae thought it possible that he would ever have been able to behave himsel so like a gentleman as he does."

"Indeed!" replied Lady Sandyford; "I assure you he is considered not more a man of merit than of delicacy. His peculiarities serve to give a zest to his humour."

"I am surprised," added Lady Margaret, "that he should have retained his Scottish accent so perfectly."

"It seems to me," rejoined the Countess, "much stronger to-day than usual; but, indeed, he appears to have always cherished his national affections upon principle. I should not be surprised were we

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to discover that some rustic beauty had early interested him—Pray, Miss Cunningham, did you ever hear any thing of the kind suggested?" Without, however, waiting for a reply, the Countess added, "We have often wondered that he never seemed disposed to form any matrimonial connexion in London, and could not account for it, but by supposing that his youthful affections had been engaged before he left Scotland."

"I should think, if that had been the case," said Lady Margaret, "he would long since have returned and married; for he is too sensible a man not to be aware, that to take a young woman of his own original condition out of her sphere, and to place her in that to which he has himself risen, is not likely to promote their mutual happiness."

"True," said the Countess; "but from what I have observed, I should suspect that his attachment must have been towards some very different object.—Pray, Miss Cunningham, what families of rank are in this neighbourhood?"

Mary, who was thrilling with she knew not what during this conversation, replied in a man-

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ner which betrayed what was passing in her mind, quite as much as the irrelevancy of the answer, "He was always a singular creature."

"Eh, dear!" exclaimed Miss Mary laughingly, on observing the confusion of her niece, "if Sir Andrew fell in love when he was Wheelie, I wouldna be surprised to hear it was wi' our Mary."

"How can you say so?" cried Mary, reddening extremely, and looking as if afraid to look.

"Have you any reason for that notion, Miss Mary?" said Lady Margaret seriously; and before the aunt had time to reply, the Countess added,—

"If the attachment was mutual, I should have some hope of enjoying a Scottish wedding soon. Nay, my dear Miss Cunningham," said her Ladyship, addressing Mary, who was sitting beside her, while she at the same time took her by the hand, "Sir Andrew is an excellent creature; and supposing for a moment that there were any foundation for what we have been saying, how would you like to be called Lady Wylie?"

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"O, she'll ne'er be that wi' Sir Andrew," cried Miss Mizy triumphantly; "for she ne'er could endure to hear a good word said o' him."

"I should think," replied Mary, with some degree of firmness, "that I did him injustice, if I had not fully acknowledged his merits, though I did not acquiesce in all that my aunt chose to say. But it could never enter my head to imagine that he would address me as a lover."

"How could you? he has been so long absent, you can have seen but little of each other," said the Countess.

"True; and perhaps from that cause I am less sensible of his merits than those who have seen more of him," replied Mary.

"It's our Mary's fortune to refuse good offers," interposed Miss Mizy.

"Good offers!" said Mary, indignantly—"yes, the offers that you and my father call good, but which no woman of any delicacy would have listened to for a moment."

"I perceive that we are carrying this subject too far," said the Countess.

"Not at all," replied Mary, with dignity;

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"why should I hesitate to say to your Ladyship, that I have seen few men of whom I know so little, that I respect more than the little Baronet?" and she added, laughingly, "I never could think of him but as the droll creature Wheelie."

"Whom you assisted to learn fifty Psalms behind a tombstone," replied the Countess, archly.

Mary was startled at the observation, and the look with which it was accompanied.

"I fear," said Lady Margaret, jocularly, "that this is idle talk; for, from Craiglands' known and obvious prejudices, any offer from Sir Andrew would not be very acceptable."

"Acceptable here or acceptable there, ye ken, Leddy Margaret," was Miss Mizy's reply, "that the Laird is a man that can abide no sort of trouble; and though it was the King himsel that offered, he wouldna tak the pains to inquire about the fitness o' the match, but just be as dure as a door nail, whichever way the thing gaed with his humour at the time."

"But your influence in any case," rejoined the Countess, "might have the most beneficial effects."

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"If any proper man were to make an offer, and Mary willing, the wedding would just hae to go on without consent, for the Laird would come in til't or a' was done," said Miss Mizy.

"Then there would be no objection on your part, even to Sir Andrew?" said Lady Sandyford.

"As for me," replied Miss Mizy, "Sir Andrew has so kithed into the great man I always thought he would be, that I freely own the offer, an it were made, would to me be a great satisfaction."

"Well, I must say," exclaimed Mary, laughing, "this is one way of making a match."

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CHAPTER XXXII.

THE COMPACT.

WHILE the ladies, free from the restraint which the presence of the other sex ever imposes on the conversation of all womankind, were furthering the decrees of fate in the drawing-room, the gentlemen at their wine were no less ingeniously working out the same desired effects. Sir Archibald was a hospitable landlord, according to the Scottish acceptation of the term; and as the Laird had a hereditary respect for what he called the sociable bottle, his spirits began to mount, and he joked with our hero on his great good luck, inquiring what for he hadna brought an English lady with him.

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"They say, Sir Andrew, ye hae gotten a gude bargain o' the Wylie estate, and ye should mak some bonny lassie the better o't."

"I think so too," observed Sir Archibald, "and I'm sure he could not do better than make up to your daughter, Craiglands;" and before the Laird had time to reply, he added, addressing himself to the Earl, "I wish, my Lord, we could persuade our friend to look that way. It is true, his rank is equal to my own, and that Lady Margaret is the sister of a duke; but the Craiglands family is highly respectable.—I beg your pardon, Sir Andrew, I have perhaps taken too great a liberty in this jocular proposal."

"Oh!" said Lord Sandyford, "if you knew Sir Andrew as well as I do, you would not lay so much stress on the disparity of rank; no man can set less, nor at the same time a more just value upon it.—Pray, Mr Cunningham, was your father in Parliament?"

Craiglands' spirits, which had previously been rising, had undergone a strange depression by these observations, and the accent and look with

which he answered "No," to the Earl's question, almost upset the gravity of the whole conspirators.

"Perhaps, however," resumed the Earl, "your grandfather was?"

The Laird was still more mortified when obliged to repeat the negative.

"That's very extraordinary," said his Lordship, as if drawing himself up into his nobility.

The Laird found himself sinking, as it were, into the swimish multitude—especially when Sir Archibald added; "I do not recollect, Craiglands, at this moment, if any of your ancestors were baronets."

"Never mind, Laird, whether they were or no," cried Sir Andrew, who perceived that the joke had been carried quite far enough—"I'll no object to Miss Mary on that account. But I doubt, were you and me 'greet about the job, Miss Mary wouldna be willing to grant her consent."

"And wha the deevil gied her ony consent in the matter?" exclaimed the old gentleman, glad to find himself not utterly insignificant.

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Lord Sandyford by this little sally discovered the Laird's jealousy of his sister's authority, and said, "It is certainly natural enough that an old maiden aunt should be averse to see her niece promoted to a higher rank than her own; but surely the Baronet is not in earnest when he supposes that Mr Cunningham is subject to any control from his sister with respect to the disposal of his daughter—The thing is not for a moment to be imagined."

"No, I'll be damn'd if it is;" cried the Laird, bravely striking the table to augment the emphasis of his asseveration—"Mary Cunningham is my dochter, and the Craiglands my estate."

"I thought," interrupted Sir Archibald, "that the Craiglands was entailed?"

"And so it is," replied the Laird, "but its on heirs general, and in the course of nature it will be Mary's."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Earl, "in that case your sister herself might succeed?"

"What o' that?" cried the Laird quickly.

"Nothing—O nothing," replied his Lordship carelessly; "but the chance of succeeding, though

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remote, may induce the old Lady to place obstacles in the way of Miss Cunninghain ever being married at all;" and his Londship added, with a very sentimental accent—"Human life is full of uncertainty, and the young as well as the old are the daily victims of death. Though the thought is painful, yet more extraordinary events have occurred than that of Miss Cunningham dying even before her father. Were her aunt to succeed to the family estate, the old Lady might be induced, by some needy young fellow, to overlook her own advanced age. I would not affirm that she contemplates any such contingency, but in the casualties and follies of the world, there is a reasonable ground for supposing, not to say suspecting, that she may be actuated by considerations of that kind."

The Laird looked alternately at each of the gentlemen present, while Sir Archibald, with a countenance expressive of the most alarming sagacity, said, "That accounts for it—that accounts for it! No one ever before could give a satisfactory reason why a gentleman, like my friend Craiglands here, should have kept his on-

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ly daughter and heiress so long in such a state of seclusion; but none of us were aware that Miss Mary might have interested motives for preventing the young lady from forming a suitable matrimonial connexion."

"De'il tak me," exclaimed the Laird, "but I'm thinking ye hae made a true guess, for I ne'er could get to the bottom o' my sister's objections to this young man and to that. When was there a more proper match than Tam Delap o' Southenan, that's heir to the whole tot o' his uncle's land and gatherings? and she gart the poor simple lassie trow he was little better than silly.—Lordsake, Sir Andrew, I wish ye would but speer Mary's price?"

"With all my heart," cried our hero.

"Then gie's your hand, and a bargain be't, gin ye find her willing," cried the Laird; and with that stretching out his hand, he shook our hero's heartily. Upon which Sir Archibald insisted that a fresh bottle should be opened, to drink success to a courtship so sanctioned; but as it was not the policy of the allied powers to allow the Laird

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time to revoke his pledge, the Earl soon after proposed that they should join the ladies.

The Laird, elevated by the wine, and the valorous sense of the independence he had shewn, entered the drawing-room with a triumphant countenance, but somewhat unsteady in his steps, and with his hands stretched out as if he was groping his way: Miss Cunningham, on observing his condition, immediately rose and led him to a chair.

"That's a dawty!" was the delighted old gentleman's exclamation.—"It's a' settled,—it's a' settled."

"What's settled?" cried Miss Misy.

"Settle thysel, Misy, and dinna scald thy lips in other folks' kail," retorted the Laird; and he added exultingly,—"Leddies, do ye ken that me and Sir Andrew hae made a paction in presence of my Lord and Sir Archibald, whereby it is covenanted between us, that he's to mak my dochter, Mary Cunningham, Leddy Wylie.—Gang up to her, Sir Andrew—gang up, ye blate wee deevil, and gie her a smack on the tae cheek, and syne on the tother—that's the way to woo."

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The ladies exchanged looks with one another; and Miss Cunningham, foreseeing some impending embarrassment, rose and proposed to her aunt, as the evening was far spent, that they should return home. The carriages were accordingly ordered, and, in the course of a few minutes, it was announced that they were at the door.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

AN ACCIDENT.

While the Laird in the dining-room was becoming generous with Auchinward's claret, Robin Taigle, in the servants'-hall, grew so mellow with the ale, that when the carriage was called, every object danced before his bewildered sight, and the sure and steadfast earth felt to him as if it were reeling beneath his steps; insomuch, that even daft Jamie said to him, "Robin, we hae a lang road before us; but I'm feart ye'll be mair fashed wi' the breadth than the length o't."

However, by the help of Sir Archibald's servants, Robin was placed in his saddle. Nevertheless, when the family came to embark, his condition was so apparent, that Sir Andrew, for whom Lord Sandyford's carriage was again in attend-

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ance, insisted that they should accept of it. The ladies would gladly have availed themselves of the offer—Miss Mary declaring, that "it was a black-burning shame to be seen driven by sic a drunken beetherel;" but the Laird was inexorable.

"We has our own carriage," said he; "and what for shouldna we tak the use o't? As for that do-na-gude, Robin, I'll let you see what I'll do wi' him when I get him hame. There shall be a resolution in the house ye dang, tak my word for't; so, sister, kipple up your coats and step in; and, Mary, gie me a grip o' your shoulther."

Our hero, however, and the servants, saved her from the pressure of his weight; and after some efforts with their more vigorous shoves and pushes, he was wedged into his seat. An inarticulate growl, intended for the customary "jou, hottes," from Robin, then admonished the horses that they were free to proceed.

Sir Andrew, apprehensive, from the state of the charioteer, that some accident might ensue, directed Lord Sandy for the servants to keep close behind with him, in readiness to render assistance, if it should prove necessary. For, as that

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Jamie predicted, the breadth of the road so troubled Robin, that the carriage went forward, tacking from side to side like a vessel beating against the wind—at every change of the zigzag driving to the very edge of jeopardy. More than once, to use another nautical phrase, it missed stays; and but for the sagacity of "the brutes" in backing, in spite of Robin's whip, the whole concern would assuredly have been cast away in the ditch. However, under that special providence which the proverb says guards all persons in the situation of this worthy coachman, the family were enabled to pass the Girdle in safety; but opposite the south gate of Eglinton, Robin seemed to hesitate, as if at a loss whether to take the Stane-castle road, or to proceed straight forward—a circumstance which surprised his master, who said justly, that had he been in his sober senses, he ought to have known the road better, and ordered him to go on to Irvine. But against this, Miss Mizy judiciously protested—affirming, in the most reasonable manner, that it would be a disgrace to them forever to pass through the town with such a pirlet of a driver. Accordingly, at her suggestion, Robin

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was commanded by the Laird, with many vituperative epithets, such as, "I'll learn you to fill yoursel fu'," and so forth, to take the wynd which leads from the Bullet-road to the Dinton-knowe; by which the family were spared from the jibes and jeers of the observant inhabitants of the ancient royal borough.

Still all went well, and the evening was beautiful. As they drove down the Kilwinning road, the gentle features of the scenery on the right were rendered still more pleasing by the softening medium of a slight ærial haze; and the swelling hills in front, beyond the woods of Eglinton, as they rose in the sober livery of the twilight, seemed to assume an abrupt and mountainous character; while dark masses of cloud, intermingled with hoary mists, like the steaming vapours of a volcano, covered the summits of Goatfield, and gave it the appearance of Mount Etna, which it so much resembles in form and outline. But our travellers were not long permitted to contemplate the calm still beauties of the summer evening. Just as Robin crossed the Red-burn bridge, by some unlucky and unguarded pull of the reins, one of

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the horses gave a sudden plunge, and the carriage was overturned in the hedge.

The ladies were speedily extricated, but the poor Laird was lifted out insensible. He, however, soon recovered; and, at first, it did not appear he had received any material injury; but on being conveyed home with the ladies and the Baronet in Lord Sandyford's coach, on alighting he complained of something no right with his inward parts; adding, however, that it was a merciful thing his head was so strong as to withstand the dunt that stunned him in the coping.

Sir Andrew advised the ladies to send for a doctor, but this the old gentleman would not permit; for, among his other prejudices and affections, he nourished a dislike to the faculty—declaring, that "since doctors had learnt to keep counts like shop-keepers, when they get a man ill, they hae as natural an interest to keep him ill, as the wabsters and souters in the health and well-doing o' their customers." The better to colour his repugnance to send for Doctor Atomy, the medical friend of the family, he affected to make light of his hurt, by exerting a degree of energy and activity pe-

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ternatural to his character. In the course of the night, however, he felt himself so seriously pained that he was obliged to raise the house.

In the meantime our hero, who had retired to his grandmother's, reflected with some degree of anxiety on the events of the day. He saw, in the caprice and prejudices of the Laird, many ingredients calculated to embitter a connexion with his family—nor was he altogether satisfied with the cold and studied reserve with which Mary had treated him after dinner in the drawing-room. His experience of the world had not instructed him in the devices of the female heart, and he was not aware that the very same demeanour which checked and repressed his ardour, and which made him doubt whether he ought even to disclose to her his long attachment, would, to a man more accustomed to the innocent wiles of womankind, have been regarded as the most encouraging symptom. In a word, he began to suspect that he had been betrayed by the influence of early recollections into a fond folly, and to think that, perhaps, the wisest step he could take, would be to abandon his intention at once.

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Why he should have given way to such reflections as these, especially as the obstacles hitherto opposed to his desires had been so greatly lessened in the course of the day, must, we imagine, be ascribed to the circumstances and vascillations of the lovers' lunacy. Certain it is that he fell asleep, after almost working himself into a persuasion that he ought not to think of irremediably uniting himself with a stock so knotted and knarled with obsolete prejudices as that of Craiglands; and that he awoke in the morning with the most delightful anticipations, as if, during sleep, his mind had unconsciously reasoned itself back again into a more congenial way of thinking. He was perfectly persuaded that the Laird, with all his faults and foibles, was in the main a man possessed of many of the homely virtues that befits the character of a resident landlord.

Immediately after breakfast, he accordingly walked to The Place for the purpose of explaining to Mary the motives of his visit to Scotland; but on entering the parlour he found only Miss Misy. "I fear," said she, "that my brother has gotten an inward injury, and we're a' sae concerned at

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the ill night he has passed, that we hae sent for Doctor Atomy to come immediately to see him." The Baronet expressed his sorrow, and as the lady told us herself, "he sympathised in a feeling manner, that shewed both his great judgment and sensibility."

Mary, in the meantime, was attending her father, and perhaps, under the circumstances, her lover might that morning have left the house without seeing her, but for Bell Lampit, who now foresaw, by so many signs of intercourse and growing cordiality, that a wedding would ensue, and could not resist her desire to inform Miss Cunningham that the Baronet was in the house.

"What's your will, Miss Mary?" said Bell, looking in at the door of the Laird's room, as if she had been really summoned.

"I did not ring—it must have been my aunt," was the reply.

"Na, na, Miss Mary, she has other fish to fry," exclaimed Bell in an audible whisper, stepping forward into the room with long tiptoe strides, using her arms and hands as if they had been

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wings to lighten her footfalls—"She's wi' Sir Andrew!"

"What's that tinkler tawpy doing here?"

"Eh! megsty, maister! I thought ye were soun' sleeping; hoo're ye the day, after the dreadful coup. Robin has gotten an awful cloor on the broo, we think his harnpan's surely dunklet."

"An I were at thee I would hoo're thee: out o' my presence this moment.—De'il an the like of that hizzy was e'er in ony creditable family," exclaimed the Laird.

"O! maister," retorted the learned Bell, "ye should thole better—a man struggling with calamity is a sight worthy of the gods!"

Mary was obliged to laugh at this mal-appropriation of one of Seneca's conceits, while, at the same time, she ordered Bell to leave the room.

"Ye see, Mary, my dear," said the old gentleman, "what it is to exceed the bounds of edication; for it's no to be doubted that too much learning has made yon lassie mad, as well as the the apostle Paul. The heads of the commonality are, in my opinion, not of a capacity to take in

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muckle mair than the plain truths o' Scripture and the Mothers' Carritches. The Question-book's ower kittle for the best o' them; I, mysel, never got farther than 'No mere man.'"

The Laird was proceeding in this way to give his opinion on the popular subject of general education, his fever disposing him to become talkative, when Miss Mizy entered.

"Mary," said the old Lady significantly, "ye'll gang doun the stair and entertain Sir Andrew, and I'll bide wi' your father till the Doctor comes."

"Doctor!" vociferated the Laird—"Wha the deevil has sent for the doctor to me? They had a stock o' impudence—A doctor to a bit birr, that I'll soon no be a prin the waur o'. I hae nae broo o' doctors, for though they may learn at the College to haggle aff a sair leg, or to howk out a rotten tooth, they ken as little about complaints in the stomach as a loch-leech, and no sae muckle; for the leech, poor thing, has a natural knowledge o' what it's about, and seeks nae fee but a pickle saut on it's neb, and a drap caller water in a bottle. Nane o' the droguery nor the roguery o' doctors for me."

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"Brother, ye're maumpering," said Miss Mizy, Mary having in the meantime left the room. "I wish ye would be still and compose yourse', and no fash your head with sic clishmaclavers."

"Whar's Mary?" cried the Laird; "I would rather hae her here than thee; for she's o' a mild and a meek nature, the which is a blessed inheritance, as Mr Symington said on Sunday, and worthy of all acceptation; whereas there be those of a worldly grain and substance, coarse to heckle, and ill to card, and needing mony a rug and rive by the powerfu' hand of chastisement, before their souls are wrought into garments o' praise."

"Brother," said Miss Mizy kindly, struck by the growing incoherency of the old gentleman, "I doobt ye're waur than ye let wit."

"I'm unco dry," was the answer. "It's a wonder o' nature, that the mair a body drinks he aye grows the drier; but Sir Archibald's claret was of a fine quality; and really yon Sir Andrew's a comical creature—I trow I gart the prejinck English Yerl laugh, when I said that Sir Andrew would never be able to kiss our Mary, unless he could speel up and get his taes in her pouches.

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It's my fear that their bairns will be sic wee modiwarts o' things, that when they begin to tottle about the house, we'll hae to tie bells to their backs to hear whar they gang, for I'm thinking they'll be running in aneath the beds. 'Odsake, but I would be blithe to see the wee totties spinning about the floor like peeries."

"I beg," said his sister, with an accent of anxiety and grief, "that you will try to keep yoursel quiet. It's no right to indulge sic vagaries."

"Ar'na they my ain granchilder!" exclaimed the Laird. "Would ye hae me as void o' naturality for them as you, that's but their aunty? and no even that, for ye're a remove farther off, Mizy.—I'll send to Glasgow for a hobby-horse to Willy, 'cause he's ca'd baith for me and my ain poor Willy that deet of his wounds. Many a sore hour o' suffering he had; but he was a brave lad wi' a liel heart. His wound wasna on the back; but won in the front o' the battle, and worn on his breast like a star o' honour."

The poor old man's paternal feelings overcame him, and he lay weeping with a childish fondness

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and simplicity, till Miss Misy, unable any longer to control her apprehensions at the rapid progress of the delirium, hastily ran down stairs to communicate her alarm.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL.

When Miss Mizy entered the parlour, she disturbed her niece and the Baronet in the middle of a very interesting conversation. He had not actually fallen on his knees before the adored object of his romantic fondness, as the novelists of the feminine gender would describe a heroine similarly situated; but, after adverting to the occurrences of the preceding day, he was advancing as rapidly towards a disclosure of the wish nearest his heart, as could reasonably be expected from a man of his temperance in all things; and Miss Cunningham was listening, as if she enjoyed the fulfilment of an ancient prediction, calm and smiling, but with a slow and profound emotion that affected the very bottom of her heart—a smooth

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rolling swell and undulation of the spirit, which a little more vehemence in her lover might have thrown into all those tempestuous commotions which formerly belonged to the lady's part of the performance in a declaration of love. She had long, for we may now speak freely of her sentiments, contemplated, with a strange feeling of wonder, blended with pleasure, the arrangement that Fate appeared to be making for the era which had now arrived; every new instance of our hero's advancement, as it came to her knowledge, contained, as it were, an admonition of their predestinated union, and this presentiment was never affected by any of those saddening influences which the mystic sense and auguries of fatalism commonly excite. The image of Wylie was associated in her imagination with the bright and joyous days of childhood; and his small and ungainly figure was in her imagination so wreathed, if the expression may be allowed, with the garlands of happy recollections, that it was endeared to the eyes of habitual affection with something more interesting than the advantages of personal appearance.

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"Mary," said her aunt, bursting hastily into the room, "it's my opinion your father's gaun by himsel."

Miss Cunningham, alarmed at the news, started from her seat, and hurried up stairs. At the same moment, Dr Atomy arrived, and daft Jamie, who was lounging about the house, on seeing the Doctor alight, ran forward to hold his horse.

"Jamie," said the Doctor, "is that you?"

"Deed is't," replied Jamie, taking the bridle, "it's my ain mother's son."

"And who is your mother, Jamie?" rejoined the Doctor.

"She's vera weel, I thank you, sir," was the answer; which so discomposed the gravity of the Doctor, that he came into the parlour with a gayer countenance than suited the occasion; insomuch, that Miss Misy put on a visage proportionally more solemn.

"My brother's vera ill, Doctor," said she, "and Sir Andrew Wylie—this is Sir Andrew—is just waiting to hear what ye think o' him."

"Is this the great Sir Andrew Wylie?" ex-

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claimed the Doctor, looking towards our hero, and bending forward with an expression of amazement in his face, which gradually assumed the cast of veneration, and, before the Baronet had time to make any reply, he went up to him, and said, "What is your opinion, Sir Andrew, of the late fall in the funds?"

"Doctor," interposed Miss Mizy, "ye maunna enter on your bad times just noo—gang first and see my brother, and then ye can come and converse wi' Sir Andrew about the breaking o' the government."

The Baronet, perceiving the solicitude of the old lady, in the hopes that by a precise answer the Doctor would the sooner go to the patient, replied, that he considered the recent fall a temporary fluctuation.

"I am most happy to hear you think so," exclaimed the Doctor, and was proceeding to enlarge on the subject, when Miss Mizy again interrupted him.

"My brother," said she, "has met wi' a severe birz and contusion, and he's in a roving fever."

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"The fall has been considerable," rejoined the Doctor, thinking of the funds.

"'Deed it was a mercy we werena a' killed outright," replied Miss Mizy; "for the chaise made a clean whamle, and the Laird was lowermost."

The Doctor, still intent on his own topic, said to Sir Andrew, "I trust, however, that the effects will not be permanent. It is melancholy to think how uncertain every thing is."

"Ye ne'er, Doctor, made a wiser observe," said Miss Mizy, morally; "for, after spending a most pleasant day at Auchinward, wha could hae thought we would hae to dree so soon sic a penance for our pleasure."

Dr Atomy looked round with a compassionate smile at Miss Mizy, and then began to speak on the common popular topics of the day to the Baronet, who, not altogether pleased with his pertinacity, reminded him of the object of his visit The Doctor, keep him free from "bad times," was an amiable and humane character, and this admonition was effectual: he immediately followed Miss Mizy to her brother's apartment.

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To the first question which he put to the Laird, the reply was characteristic.

"I'm vera weel, Doctor," said the patient—"ne'er was better; but there's a something I dinna understand wi' me, for a' that; and I'm fashed wi' strange folk; crowds o' them come and sit behind the curtains at my bed-head, and the de'il a ane of them will speak out, and tell me their cracks, but they continue whispering and whispering, and hugger-muggering, as if they were smuggling something awa'."

Both his sister and daughter, who were standing beside the Doctor, were much affected by this speech, and could not refrain from tears; for it was too evident, from the Doctor's manner, that there was then indeed something about to be removed. The whisperings of which the dying man complained were the voices of those who had been sent to bear him from this mortal world.

The Doctor having, as delicately as he could, expressed his fears for the consequences of the injury which the old gentleman had suffered, and having prescribed some simple medicine, rather to

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uphold the character of the profession than with any hope of doing the patient good, soon after retired, and Bell Lampit was almost immediately dispatched to the Manse to request the attendance of Mr Symington.

Bell, who never tarried on her errands between one person and another, met the Minister walking leisurely by himself on the shady side of the high-road.

"Ye maun come up to The Place directly, sir," was her salutation, "for we're a' feared that the Laird's vital spark's gaun out. Miss Mary sent me wi' her compliments to bid you come."

"I'm very sorry to hear this.—I understood his hurt was of no consequence," replied the clergyman.

"'Deed, sir," said Bell, "his life is just like the dying lamp's unsteady flame. 'To be or not to be,' is the state of his precious soul; so I hope ye'll no delay, for it will be a sad and a sore thing if the Laird's alloo't to jump the shoal o' time like the beasts that perish." And holding a jargon dialect of this sort, Bell returned home with the Minister. But before reaching the house

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the inflammation of the brain had so rapidly advanced, that the patient was in no condition to receive the spiritual physician.

In the course of the afternoon the violence of the symptoms abated, and for several days the Laird languished under the evident decay of all his faculties. He was not, apparently, very ill, but his strength was entirely prostrated, and he lingered within the imbecility of the second childhood, in its most helpless state, smitten with a patient sillyness that could not be seen without sorrow. He had lost the sense of present objects, and fondled over the recollections of former years. Sometimes he thought of his lady, and would talk to her of their household concerns—occasionally chiding her for being low-spirited, and reminding her of the great honour and advantages of fortune which she had acquired by their marriage. But the playfulness of his children in their childhood chiefly engaged his fancy; and he would chuckle with the greatest glee at their little pranks. In the midst, however, of his mirth, some gleam of reminiscence would shoot across his mind, and,

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suddenly recollecting that his darling Willy was long dead, he would break out into fresh and loud lamentations, like the grief of an innocent child that bewails the loss of a favourite bird. In this condition he continued seven days. In the afternoon of the eighth, prostrate nature seemed to rally her forces; but death was more powerful, and she sank in the contest.

Though Craiglands possessed few of those qualities which attract general popularity, or personal esteem, he was yet so blameless in his life, and so easy as a landlord, that he enjoyed among his tenants and village neighbours, something kindlier and stronger than either popularity or esteem. The homeliness of his manners came in aid of their national reverence, for the honours of birth and rank, and made them yield a homage of feeling and respect when they heard of his death, as profound as that which is paid to the memory of far greater beneficence, talent, and worth. He was, besides, the last of an ancient line, a circumstance in itself calculated to awaken interesting associations; for although his sister and daughter

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survived, the country folks around considered the family extinguished by the death of the last male heir. The day of his funeral was, in consequence, one of great solemnity in Stoneyholm, and all the neighbouring hamlets. Not only the gentry, but the tenants attended, and many of the inhabitants of the village; a vast concourse of old and young assembled at The Place, and the retinue that followed the hearse, was in perfect accordance with the pageantry which the people thought due to the obsequies of the last Laird.

Among several old persons in the village, who had spent their lives in the service of the Craiglands, was Thomas Daisy, a very aged man, of such a venerable appearance, that it was a common saying that nobody could tell when he was young. He had been upwards of seventy years nominally the gardener, but for some time prior to this period, he had been pensioned with a widow in Stoneyholm. Feeble with extreme age and infirmity, he had not strength to join the other mourners at The Place, but he waited for the procession at the door of the cottage where he re-

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sided, and as it passed he came forward leaning on his staff. Holding his hat in his hand, and with slow and tottering steps, he followed at some little distance. His venerable appearance, his long flowing grey hairs, and the silent sorrow with which he moved along by himself, attracted the attention of the children of Mr Tannyhill's school, and they gradually detached themselves from the spectators, and forming a circle round him, as he falteringly walked forward, insensibly fell into the order of a little procession, of which he was the leader.

When the hearse reached the gate of the churchyard, the carriages of the gentry drew aside, and the coffin was taken out and placed on the spakes. This occupied a little time, during which old Thomas, attended by the children, came up, and passed on towards the family burying-place. It was an ancient, massy, walled enclosure, ornamented with sculptured skulls and urns: a tablet, on which the arms of the Craigland Cunninghams had been emblazoned, in the rude carving of the sixteenth century, occupied a niche

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over the entrance. This trophy of the olden time had long been respected by the villagers; but during the incumbency of Doctor Dozadeal, the churchyard-gate happened to be allowed to fall from its hinges, by which the school-boys, in their play hours, having free access, it had suffered, among other of their dilapidations. Certainly, however, from no malice against the family; on the contrary, solely, if we rightly recollect our own juvenile sentiments on the occasion, (being concerned in the devastation,) from a most conscientious abhorrence of the idolatrous beasts of papistry and prelacy, some traditionary opinion having arisen in the school, that the said arms, with the supporters, had been idols of old, belonging to that once Babylonish sanctuary, the Abbey of Kilwinning. Nor was the notion entirely without a shadow of historical fact; for the founder of the Craigland Cunninghams was a cadet of the Glencairn family; and when the pious Earl of that name herried the religious houses of Ayrshire, during the Reformation, Sir Firebrand Cunningham of Burnthelyke, came in for a share of

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the plunder, and so laid the subsequent grandeur of his descendants, in the portion which he received of the domains of that rich abbacy. The Laird, at the time when the arms were defaced, had been officiously, as we well recollect it was deemed, told of the exploit, and had vowed a terrible vengeance, and also to restore the sculpture, neither of which, however, he performed; so that it was observed as an ominous and remarkable thing, that the escutcheon of the family was entirely obliterated.

When the coffin was borne to the entrance of the sepulchre, the spakes were drawn out, and the undertaker's men having carried it within the enclosure, it was placed on two planks over the grave, till a few particular friends who followed it, had received the cords attached to the handles. At this moment old Thomas, with his head still bare, came forward opposite to the entrance, and as the planks were removed, and the remains of his old master were lowered into the earth, he was unable to control his emotion. When the spectators in silence uncovered as the coffin reach-

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ed its last rest—a homage to the dispensations of Heaven, more affecting than any other funeral service—he sunk down on his knees, and continued in that posture till the grave was filled, the earth trodden in, and the turf laid forever.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CONCLUSION.

It is, in our opinion, a more awful thing to be born than to die; but without discanting upon the question, it cannot be doubted that it is easier to write the first than the last chapter of a book. Every one of our readers must have seen, that the Laird's death, though it no doubt delayed, yet it was not an event calculated to subtract any thing from the happiness of our hero. Indeed, within as short a period as decency would permit, and shorter too than the prudent Miss Mizy thought decent, Mary and the Baronet were united. It would have afforded us the greatest pleasure to describe the notable tasks and cares which Miss Mizy took upon herself at the wedding—how she received a roving commission from her niece,

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the heiress and bride, to go into Glasgow, and, in conjunction with Miss Peggy Picken, there to make the most judicious purchases for the bridal paraphernalia—in what manner, for two whole days, the judicious maiden gentlewomen went from shop to shop, inspecting and pricing the articles, until they had ascertained where the best could be got cheapest—how Miss Peggy caught a severe cold in the reconnoitre, and was obliged to wear a piece of red flannel round her throat, a most sovereign remedy, when they sallied forth to make the actual purchases—in what manner they were received on that occasion, in consequence of having taxed the politeness and civility of the shopkeepers, to the utmost stretch of human patience, in the preliminary visits—but all these things would demand a circumstantiality of narration, totally incompatible with the rapid summation of a concluding chapter. Let it suffice then to say, that Sir Andrew and Mary, after being three several Sundays proclaimed in church, were united by Mr Symington at The Place in the holy bands of matrimony, in presence only of the ve-

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nerable grandmother, Mr Tannyhill, and the servants, Miss Misy acting as bridemaid. On this occasion Bell Lampit, seeing old Martha affected to tears, thought proper, at the conclusion of the blessing, to tune her pipes, and send forth a most vociferous sobbing and wail; which, however, instead of awakening any sympathy, set all present a-laughing.

Lord and Lady Sandyford had immediately, after the Laird's death, returned to Chastington-Hall, where, as soon as an easy journey permitted, they were visited by the happy pair.

During that visit, much to the surprise of the Marquis of Avonside, Sir Andrew accepted the Chiltren Hundreds, and ended his parliamentary career; an event which the Marquis attributed to the exercise of some sinister influence on the part of the Earl of Sandyford, whom his Lordship considered as envious of the address, by which he had secured the great talents of the Baronet to the Ministerial side. Sir Andrew also, at the same time, closed his lucrative connexion with Mr Vellum, declaring, that he was satisfied

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with the fortune he had acquired. The Earl and Countess again urged him to become their neighbours; and Castle-Rooksborough, which his Lordship had in the meantime purchased, was formally offered as a temptation; but firm in his intention to promote the welfare of his native country, he resisted alike the solicitations of interest and friendship, and returned to Scotland, where he has since continued to reside permanently, making, however, occasional visits with his lady to his old southern friends—in the last of which he heard that Ferrers, who occasioned so much unhappiness to the Countess, had been killed in the Peninsula; and that the rector, who was also dead, had amply provided for the orphan Monimia.

The only part of our hero's conduct which has excited any speculation, and we mention it without comment, since it may be deemed equivocal, is the manner in which he has acted towards his grandmother. Many of the villagers at Stoneyholm thought, when he rebuilt the mansion-house of Wylie, that he ought to have removed Martha to it; indeed Lady Wylie herself was very urgent with the old woman to live with them, but the

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Baronet said nothing, while Martha declared that they would both better shew their regard, by allowing her to spend the evening of her days in her own way, peaceably in the service of Him who had vouchsafed, of his own free grace, to shed such unmerited abundance on her declining years.

By an arrangement conducted through the medium of Sir Archibald Maybole, Mr Symington got a call to the parish of Auchinward; and Mr Tannyhill, to the surprise and delight of the people, who had long venerated his amiable and gentle dispositions, was promoted from the school to the church, where he still exercises with undiminished mildness the pastoral duties of the cure. On a late occasion, when in the neighbourhood, we went to his "Examine," chiefly drawn thither by mere curiosity, many years having passed away since we were present at any thing of the kind. We found him seated in the venerable carved walnut elbow-chair, amidst the elders, in the session-house, listening with patient affection to the replies of the youth of both sexes assembled; and it seemed to our observant eyes, that he often sighed to remark how much they were inferior in

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religious knowledge to their orthodox parents. Among others present was a lad, Robin Kennedy, clothed in the sprucest cut of clipping Jock, who, under the style and title of Mr Shaper, had, after a three months' insight with Messrs Buts and Lining, clothiers on the South Bridge of Edinburgh, supplanted his old master, Thomas Steek, in the business of the young farmers of the parish. Robin Kennedy was dressed in his Sunday suit, but happening unfortunately to be seated on a bench where a nail protruded, in standing up to answer the question, "What does every sin deserve?" he tore his breeches, and exclaimed, looking back at the nail, and feeling the wounded corduroy,—"God's curse."—"Very well, Robin," said Mr Tannyhill, "but soberly and coolly".

For some reason or another, not explained in any satisfactory manner to the public, Miss Misy is permitted to enjoy The Place by herself, where she is sometimes visited by the Baronet and Lady Wylie, with their children. But on those occasions the drawing-room is always carefully locked; for the children, as she has herself assured us, are such tempests, particularly the boys, that they

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have no mercy on the furniture. One of them, before the precaution of locking the door, actually picked off the putty which, as we have described, concealed the face of the blooming May in the emblematic picture of that month. And here we should not omit to inform our readers, that when we last called at The Place, Miss Mizy told us, that in sorting some old papers she had made a great literary discovery, namely, a volume written by her brother, in his own hand-writing, containing, as she assured us, "A most full account of all manner of particularities anent the decay of the ancient families of the west country."—A work that we have some reason to hope Sir Andrew may induce her to transmit to us, in order that we may arrange it for publication; "for though the Laird," as she observed, "wasna a man of book lair, he had yet a nerve at observation, and a faculty to note whatsoever came to pass, in a manner just extraordinar, as any rational person, no over critical about points and phrases, may very clearly discern." Should the Baronet succeed in procuring the manuscript, we shall lose no time in sending it to press for the entertainment and edi-

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fication of the public. Meanwhile, having brought his own biography to a close, we leave him, as all heroes ought to be left, in the full enjoyment of the manifold gifts and felicities which prudence and good fortune united can procure.

THE END.

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